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The story of
Chandni Chowk

(Page 24)

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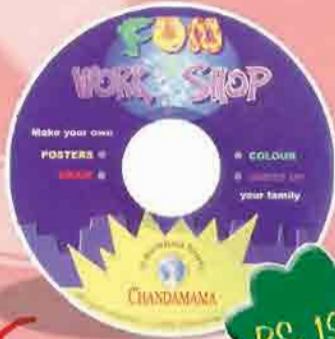


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A PRACTICAL NEW YEAR RESOLUTION

A nation-wide survey has brought out findings which are, if not shocking, not very complimentary to the state of elementary education in India, which is aiming to put every child in school by the year 2010. The survey was conducted by an NGO in Mumbai, Pratham, for the Planning Commission. Now, for some figures. The survey, confined to two age groups—7 years to 10 and 11 to 14 years—and conducted in a cross-section of nearly 30 districts in as many States, shows that one-sixth of the number of girls joining schools at the beginning of the academic year drop out within a few months.

On an average, one-fourth of the number of students—both girls and boys—are not able to write down a full sentence by themselves, not even when it is dictated. The survey had tested children's abilities in writing, reading, and arithmetic. In Allahabad and Lucknow districts of Uttar Pradesh, nearly 80 per cent of children between 7 and 10 years, studying in government-run schools, could not read. The situation in private schools is only marginally better.

The country, which eradicated scourges like small pox and malaria, and is on the threshold of similar success against polio, is fighting yet another—illiteracy. We have to view the survey findings against this backdrop. Success may be far away, but that does not mean that we can delay taking efforts any longer. Any resolve in this regard need not wait for an auspicious hour or day. However, now that we are about to usher in a New Year, let us take advantage of its shade and decide that in 2005 and in the following five years, we will first prevent drop-outs, and then revamp the educational system at least to help children acquire functional literacy.

We are reminded of our President Dr.A.P.J.Abdul Kalam's exhortation: Each one teach one. Nothing can be simpler or more straight forward.

**WE WISH ALL OUR READERS AND OUR
WELL-WISHERS A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

Only a culture without hope cannot forgive
a culture that doesn't believe in progress or redemption.
Have we so little faith in ourselves that we can't accept the
possibility of maturation, change, cure ?

- Blake Morrison

I live not in myself, but I become portion of that around me.
Ready money is Alladin's lamp.

- Byron

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MAIL BAG



Ishwari Girimav of Hubli (Karnataka) writes:

I enjoy reading Chandamama. I learnt so many moral values from the stories in the magazine. I also came to know so many new subjects from the articles.

By e-mail from Sanjay Kelkar:

Since you informed me that Chandoba (in Marathi) is still published, I purchased a copy for my son. I would like to mention with pleasure that it was the same old Chandoba that I used to read some 30-35 years ago. The latest copy rejuvenated the sweet memories of my childhood.

This came from A. Geetanjali Nanda, Bangalore:

I love Chandamama very much. I really like the colour illustrations which go well with the stories and other articles. Chandamama is very nice and useful to us. By reading it, we gain much knowledge. Chandamama is very special for we children.

Reader Sandhya of Bangalore writes:

Inclusion of Letters to the Editor always makes the magazine interesting. I miss this column sometimes. All members of my family used to enjoy reading the magazine. Now the features are mostly for kids; there are too many comics. The stories once had the power to transport us back to the ages they spoke about, but now very few stories have that capacity. They have become enjoyable only to kids. Please improve the quality of the paper. Preserving the magazine has now become a problem.

This came from Mumbai, from Kumtesh Bharucha:

Chandamama is a very interesting magazine. Children get a lot of general knowledge from the stories and articles. Please keep up the standard.

Reader Deepa writes from Bangalore:

Chandamama is nice and very interesting to read. It helps us to improve our English. All the stories are wonderful. The Children's Special was great.

**NEW TALES
OF KING
VIKRAM AND
THE VETALA**

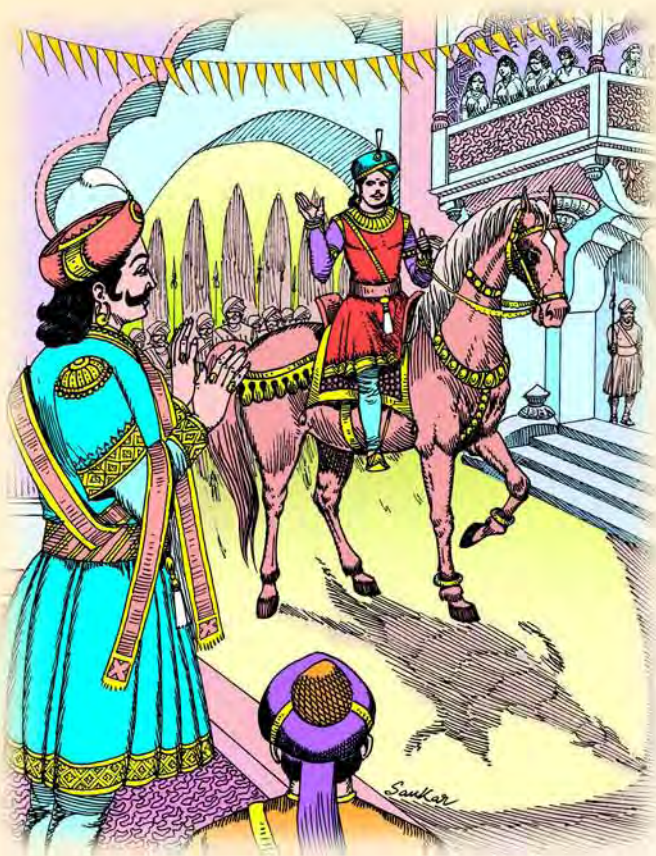
THE PRINCE AND THE NYMPH

It was a dark, moonless night. Occasional flashes of lightning lit up the sombre scene, causing an eerie dance of jerky and frightening shadows in the cremation ground. Occasionally, the spine-chilling howl of a jackal or the blood-curdling laughter of some unseen evil spirit cut into the silence that hung shroud-like over the area. Altogether, it was a scene that could strike a chill in the bravest heart. But nothing could daunt the intrepid King Vikram. Once again, he made his way to the ancient gnarled tree where the corpse was hanging. A bone crunched under his feet and a screeching ghost rose from the dust in shuddering frenzy as he marched ahead.

Oblivious to all this, he reached the tree and brought down the corpse. Slinging it astride his shoulder, he had just begun his return journey when the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King! I know you to be unparalleled in both wisdom and learning. No doubt you are well-versed in the rules of demeanour, and are discerning enough to discriminate between good and bad conduct. Despite this, here you are – wandering in a cremation ground in the middle of the night, on a fool's errand! I fear you have temporarily lost your senses. There are occasions when even the greatest intellectual or scholar can lose his judgement and behave like an utter fool. To illustrate, let me tell you the story of Jayant – a prince who was as handsome as the God of Love, but acted in a very peculiar manner!" The vampire then narrated the following story.

Raghuvarma was the King of Kanchanagiri. He and his queen were deeply depressed because they were childless. After many years of pilgrimages, vows and





prayers, a male child was born to them. What was remarkable about the infant was its extraordinary beauty. Its entire being seemed to emanate an almost ethereal radiance, which astonished all those who saw it and thrilled the king and queen. Nor did this radiance diminish as the young prince, named Jayant, grew up – on the contrary, it seemed to increase with every passing day!

As the years passed, Prince Jayant grew up to be as good-natured as he was good-looking. When he came of age, his parents sent him to a school in the Aravallis, run by the renowned sage Krishnachandra. He returned to the capital after gaining proficiency in the arts, literature, statecraft, and warfare.

The king and queen had decided to conduct the prince's coronation as soon as he had completed his education. But Jayant requested them to wait for some more time, as he wished to undertake a tour of the entire kingdom before taking on the responsibility of governing it. The king gave his consent. He arranged for the best horse in the royal stables to be given to the prince for his journey. Jayant was also given the necessary provisions to sustain him for the duration of his tour.

A week after he had left the palace, he reached the mountains on the eastern border of the kingdom. There was an ancient temple to Goddess Parvati on the highest mountain peak. It was believed that *yakshas* and other demi-gods used to descend from the heavens to worship at this temple. Having heard a great deal about the glory of the deity, Jayant now desired to visit the temple. He began climbing the peak.

On reaching the summit, he found it very neat and beautiful, offering a panoramic view of the surrounding landscape. Just outside the temple was a pool. The red lotuses bobbing on its surface offered a magnificent sight against the crystal-clear water.

After taking a bath in the pool, Jayant entered the temple to pay his respects to the deity. As he was coming out, his attention was arrested by the sweet strains of a *Veena* coming from the temple. Who could be playing the instrument at this deserted spot? Filled with curiosity, he followed the music to its source.

Soon, he came across a maiden of indescribable beauty, who was engrossed in playing the *Veena*. A glance at her was enough to tell Jayant that she was no ordinary woman, but a celestial damsel.

As the damsel's eyes fell on the handsome prince, she kept aside her *Veena* and said, "I'm Chitrlekha, a nymph; may I know who you are?"

Jayant told her all about himself. When he had finished, Chitrlekha said, "I received many proposals of marriage from demi-gods and other celestial beings. But I did not like any of them, and so remain unmarried. Now for the first time, I've come across someone whose wondrous good looks hold me spellbound. Marry me, and we shall go away to the celestial world where we can live forever in great luxury and bliss!"

Jayant was startled by this unexpected proposal. He replied, "I'm one who will shortly become the king of this land. At present, I'm out on a tour of the kingdom to see for myself the joys and sorrows of my people before ascending the throne. Right now, I have no intention to get married. Let me take leave of you now."

But Chitrlekha stopped him, saying, "It's all right if you don't wish to marry me. But please, at least allow me to spend a few days in your company! Can I come

with you on your tour?” Seeing that he could not shake her off, Jayant was forced to agree.

Thereafter, Chitralekha accompanied him to all the places he visited. At each place, he met the common people and talked to them. He found out the problems they faced and arranged to solve them. The people welcomed him with joy and offered him their humble food, which he readily accepted. At times, he had to sleep on the bare floor. Chitralekha, the nymph who was used to heavenly luxury, also had to perforce adjust to these living arrangements.

One day, as the two were travelling through a forest, they saw a young woman who was sitting under a tree, weeping bitterly. As they went closer, they saw that the woman was unsightly in appearance.

Prince Jayant asked her, “Who are you and why are you crying?” The woman replied, “My name is Jalaja. My ugliness is the bane of my life. I am in love with a noble youth named Ravi, who feels that one’s character is more important than external beauty. He loves me for my nature and personality, and is determined to marry me and none other. But his mother refuses to let her son marry an ugly girl. She has threatened Ravi that if he weds me, she will end her life by jumping into a well! Unable to endure all this any longer, I decided to solve the problem once and for all, and came away into this jungle to commit suicide. But now, I am not able to summon up enough courage to do it!”

Jayant was deeply touched by Jalaja’s story. Turning to Chitralekha, he asked, “You are a nymph, with divine powers – can’t you help this unfortunate girl by altering her appearance?”

Chitralekha smiled. Going close to Jalaja, she gently stroked her head thrice. Lo and behold, the next moment, the unsightly girl turned into a damsel of incomparable beauty! Overwhelmed with joy, Jalaja fell at the feet of both Jayant and Chitralekha, and thanked them profusely before taking leave of them.

After she had vanished from view, Jayant turned towards Chitralekha to praise her for her good deed. But as his eyes fell on her face, he was rooted to the ground in shock. Was this the same nymph who, only moments ago had been a vision of peerless beauty? Her

face had lost its glow, her gait its grace. She now appeared old, haggard and ugly!

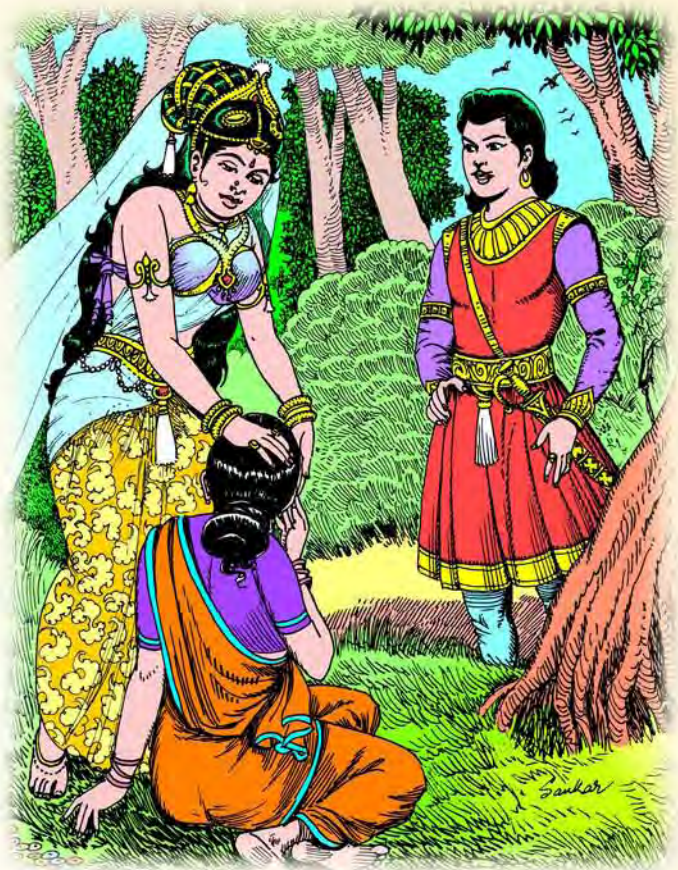
Quite a few moments passed before the horrified Jayant could find his tongue. He asked her, “What was the need for such a great sacrifice? Why did you give away your beauty to Jalaja?”

Without any sign of emotion, Chitralekha calmly replied, “After moving about in your company all these days, I have come to understand the happiness one gets by selfless service. Also, this was the only way by which Jalaja could be made beautiful. That’s why I did it! It doesn’t matter if I’m ugly; she is more in need of good looks than I am!”

Overwhelmed by emotion, Jayant exclaimed, “Who says you’re ugly? Your entire being shines with divine beauty!” He then reached out to clasp her hand and said, “I would like to marry you!”

The next moment, there was another miracle. Gone was Chitralekha’s ugliness – her divine beauty was back in all its radiance!

At this point, the vampire concluded his story and demanded, “O king! There is no doubt that Jayant was



God knocks the door thrice

A man was sitting in an easy chair on the first floor of his house. The floods started rising. One hour later a boat came and said, "Come on, get in!" The man said, "No, I've full faith in my God. Lord Siva will save me!" The boat left.

Two hours later he was forced to move to the second floor. Another rescue boat came and said "Come on, get in." Again the man said, "No, I've faith in my God. Lord Siva will save me!"

Three hours later he was forced to move up to the terrace. A helicopter came and said "Come on, get in." Again the man said, "No, I've faith in my God. Lord Siva will save me."

Four hours later he, drowned and went to heaven. He asked Lord Siva why He did not save him. Lord Siva said, "I tried! I sent you two rescue boats and a helicopter!!!!"

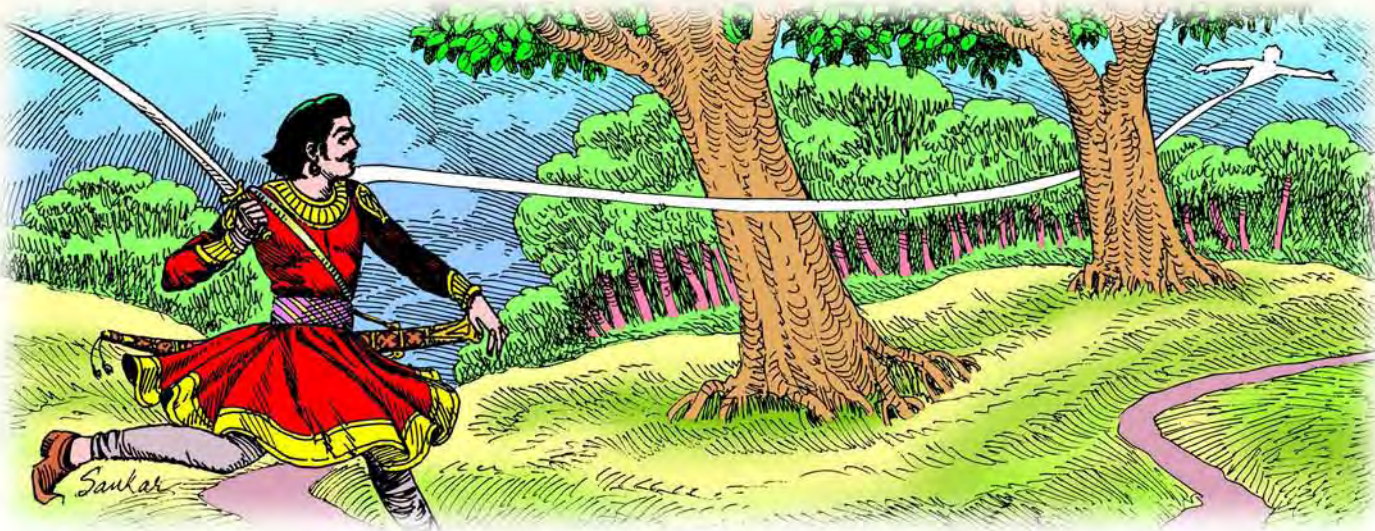


an exceedingly handsome man – so good-looking as to win the heart of even a heavenly damsel! Having rejected the hand of the breathtakingly beautiful nymph, why then did he offer to marry her after she had turned ugly? Doesn't his behaviour appear inconsistent and irrational in the extreme? Answer my question if you can. If you remain silent despite knowing the answer, your head shall shatter into a thousand fragments!"

King Vikram calmly replied, "There is nothing inconsistent or irrational about Jayant's behaviour. It is evident that he was an enlightened youth who did not attach much importance to transient physical beauty. He valued virtues and inner beauty more. Initially he rejected Chitrlekha's proposal because he found her shallow and obsessed with her good looks. But Chitrlekha underwent

a change of heart after coming in contact with the noble prince and moving with him at close quarters. His selflessness and love for his people appealed to her and she resolved to follow the same path. As her better nature was roused, her vanity disappeared and she unhesitatingly gave her beauty away to one who needed it. Her self-sacrifice and generosity were the aspects of beauty that Jayant saw in her, when he agreed to marry her. It was his touch that restored her to her former beauty – such is the power of nobility!"

As soon as he had finished speaking, the vampire, along with the corpse, moved off his shoulder with a jerk and flew back to the tree. With a little sigh, King Vikram squared his shoulders and retraced his steps towards the tree, his dogged determination evident in his steady gait.





From the pen of
Ruskin Bond

Wanderings in Agra

On December 16, 2004, the Government of India issued a commemorative stamp to mark the 350th anniversary of Taj Mahal. We reproduce here the author's recollections of his visit to Agra.

The cycle-rickshaw is the best way to go about in Agra. Its smooth gliding motion and leisurely rate of progress are in keeping with the pace of life in this old-world city. The rickshawallah juggles his way through the crowded bazaars, exchanging insults with tonga-drivers, pedestrians and other cyclists; but once on the broad Mall or Taj Road, his curses change to carefree song, and he freewheels along the treelined avenues. Old colonial-style bungalows still stand in large compounds shaded by peepul, banyan, neem and jamun.

Looking up, I notice a number of bright paper kites that flutter, dip and swerve in the cloudless sky. I cannot recall seeing so many kites before.

"Is it a festival today?" I ask.

"No, *sahib*," says the rickshawallah, "not even a holiday."

"Then why so many kites?"

He does not even bother to look up. "You can see kites every day, *sahib*. In Agra, people still fly kites. There are kite-fights every Sunday, and heavy bets are sometimes placed on the outcome."

As we near the city, I notice kites stuck in trees or dangling from electric wires; but there are always others soaring up to take their place. I ask the rickshawallah to tell me something about the kite-fliers and the kitemakers, but the subject bores him.

"You had better see the Taj today, *sahib*."

"All right; take me there. I can lunch afterwards."

It is difficult to view the Taj at noon. The sun strikes the white marble, and there is a great dazzle of reflected light. I stand there with averted eyes looking at everything—the formal gardens, the surrounding walls of red sandstone, the winding river—everything except the monument I have come to see.

It is there, of course, very solid and real, perfectly preserved, with every jade, jasper or *lapis lazuli* playing its part in the overall design; and after a while, I could shade my eyes and take in a vision of shimmering white marble. The light rises in waves from the paving stones, and the squares of black and white marble create an effect of running water. Inside the chamber, it is cool and dark but rather musty, and I waste no time in hurrying out again into the sunlight. I walk the length of a gallery and turn with some relief to the river scene. The sluggish Yamuna



winds past Agra on its way to join the Ganges. I know the Yamuna well. I know it where it emerges from the foothills near Kalsi, cold and blue from the melting snows; I know it as it winds through fields of wheat and sugarcane and mustard, across the flat plains of Uttar Pradesh, sometimes placid, sometimes in flood. I know the Yamuna in Delhi.

"You must have seen people from almost every country in the world," I ask the gardener's boy.

"That is so. They all come here to look at the Taj. Kings and Queens, Presidents and Prime Ministers, film stars and poor people, too. And I look at them. That way it isn't boring."

"Well, you have the Taj to thank for that," I remark.

He gazes thoughtfully at the shimmering monument. His eyes are accustomed to the sharp sunlight. He sees the Taj every day, but at this moment he is really looking at it, thinking about it, wondering what magic it must possess to attract people from all corners of the earth, to bring them here walking through his father's well-kept garden so that he can have something new and fresh to look at each day.

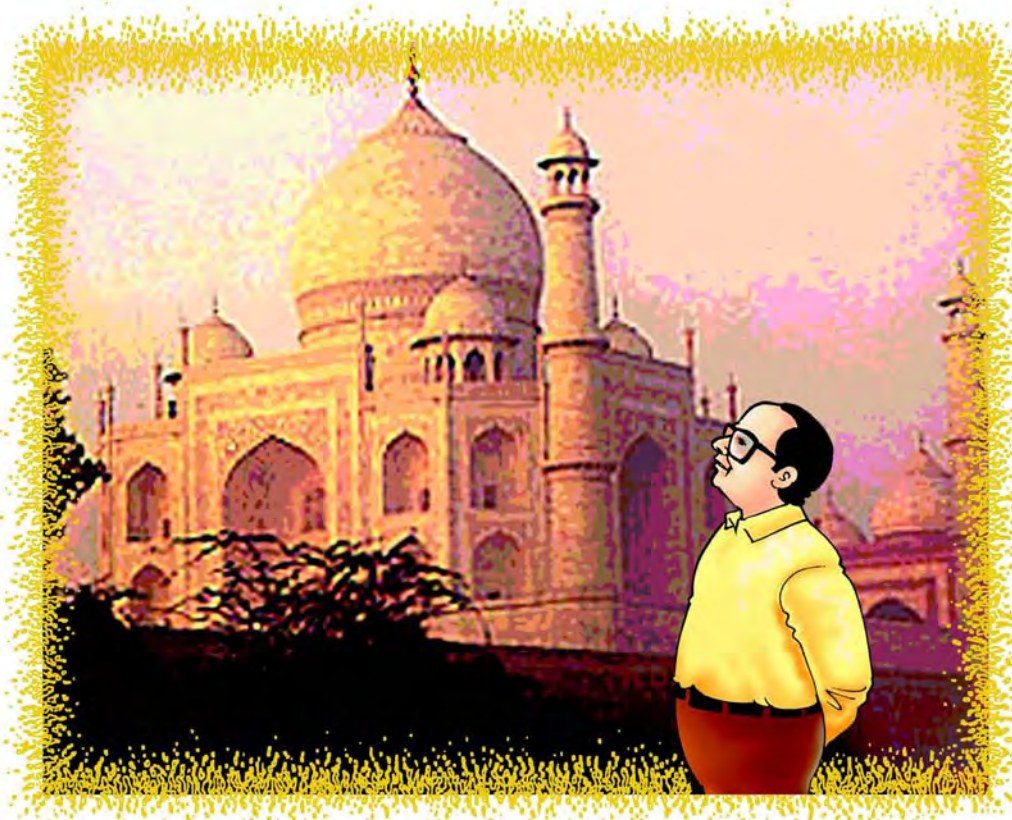
A cloud, a very small cloud, passes across the face of the sun; and in the softened light I, too, am able to look at the Taj without screwing up my eyes.

As the boy said, it does not change. Therein lies its beauty. For the effect on the traveller is the same today as it was some three hundred years ago when Bernier wrote: "Nothing offends the eye... No part can be found that is not skilfully wrought, or that has not its peculiar beauty."

And so, for a few moments, this poem in marble is on view to two unimportant people—the itinerant writer and the gardener's boy.

We say nothing; there is really nothing to be said.

In the afternoon I walk through the old bazaars which lie to the west of Akbar's great red sandstone fort, and I am not surprised to find a small street which is almost



entirely taken up by kite-shops. Most of them sell the smaller, cheaper kites, but one small dark shop has in it a variety of odd and fantastic creations. Stepping inside, I find myself face to face with the doyen of Agra's kite-makers, Hosain Ali, a feeble old man whose long beard is dyed red with the juice of *mehndi* leaves. He has just finished making a new kite from bamboo, paper and thin silk, and it lies outside in the sun, firming up. It is a pale pink kite, with a small green tail.

The old man is soon talking to me, for he likes to talk and is not very busy. He complains that few people buy kites these days (I find this hard to believe), and tells me that I should have visited Agra twenty-five years ago, when kite-flying was the 'sport of kings' and even grown up men found time to spend an hour or two every day with these gay, dancing strips of paper. Now, he says, everyone hurries, hurries in a heat of hope, and delicate things like kites and day-dreams are trampled underfoot.

"Once I made a wonderful kite," says Hosain Ali nostalgically. "It had a number of small, very light paper discs trailing on a thin bamboo frame. At the end of each disc, I fixed a sprig of grass, forming a balance on both sides. On the first and largest disc I painted a face and gave it eyes made of two small mirrors. The discs, which grew smaller from head to tail, gave the kite the

appearance of a crawling serpent. It was difficult to get this great kite off the ground. Only I could manage it.

"Of course, everyone had heard of the Dragon Kite I made, and word went around that there was some magic in its making. A large crowd arrived on the *maidan* to watch me fly the kite.

"At first the kite would not leave the ground. The discs made a sharp wailing sound, the sun was trapped in the little mirrors, my kite had eyes and tongue and a trailing silver tail. I felt it come alive in my hands. It rose from the ground, rose steeply into the sky, moving farther and farther away, with the sun still glinting in its dragon eyes. And when it went very high, it pulled fiercely on the twine, and my son had to help me with the reel.

"But still the kite pulled, determined to be free—yes, it had become a living thing and at last the twine snapped, and the wind took the kite, took it over the rooftops and the waving trees and the river and the far hills forever. No one saw where it fell. Sahib, are you listening? The Dragon Kite is lost, but for you I'll make a bright new kite to fly."

"Make me one," I say, moved by his tale, or rather by the manner of its telling. "I will collect it tomorrow, before I leave Agra. Let it be a beautiful kite. I won't fly it. I'll hang it on my wall, and will not give it a chance to get away."

It is evening, and the winter sun comes slanting through the intricate branches of a banyan tree, as a cycle-rickshaw—a different one this time—brings me to a forgotten corner of Agra that I have always wanted to visit. This is the old Roman Catholic cemetery where so many early European travellers and adventurers lie buried.

Although it is quite probably the oldest Christian cemetery in northern India, it has none of that overgrown, crumbling look that is common to old cemeteries in monsoon lands. It is a bright, even cheerful place, and the jingle of tonga-bells and other street noises can be heard from any part of the grounds. The grass is cut, the gravestones are kept clean, and most of the inscriptions are still readable.

The caretaker takes me straight to the oldest grave—this is the oldest known European grave in northern India—and it happens to be that of an Englishman, John

Mildenhall. The epitaph can be read out clearly:

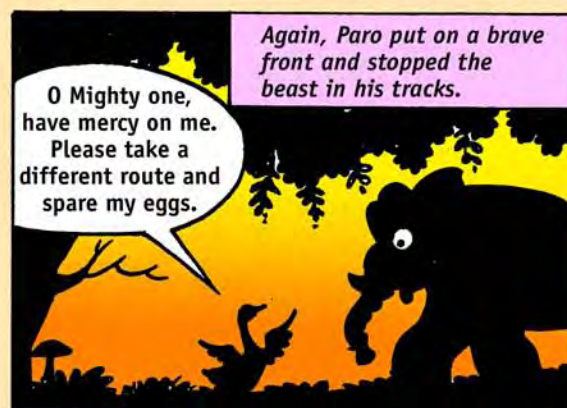
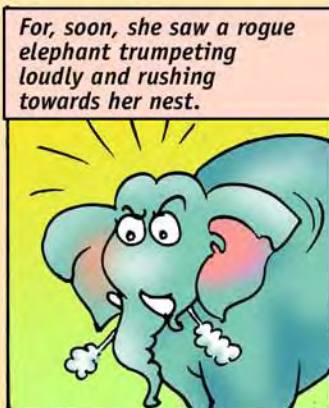
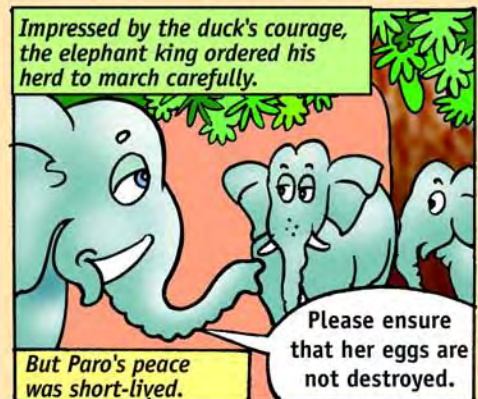
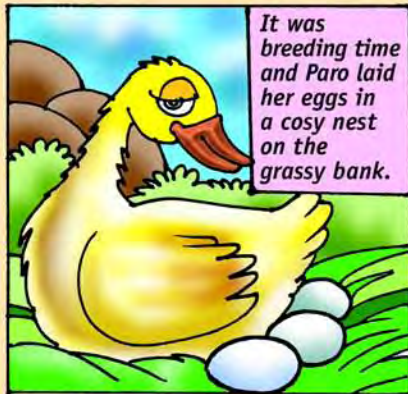
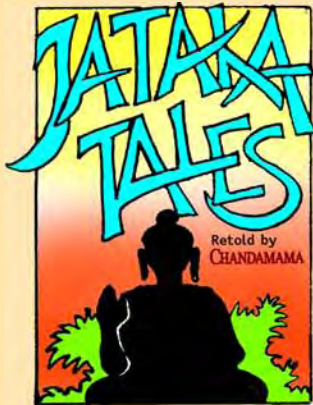
Here lies John Mildenhall, Englishman, who left London in 1599 and travelling to India through Persia, reached Agra in 1605 and spoke with Emperor Akbar. On a second visit in 1614 he fell ill at Lahore, died at Ajmer, and was buried here through the good offices of Thomas Kerridge, Merchant.

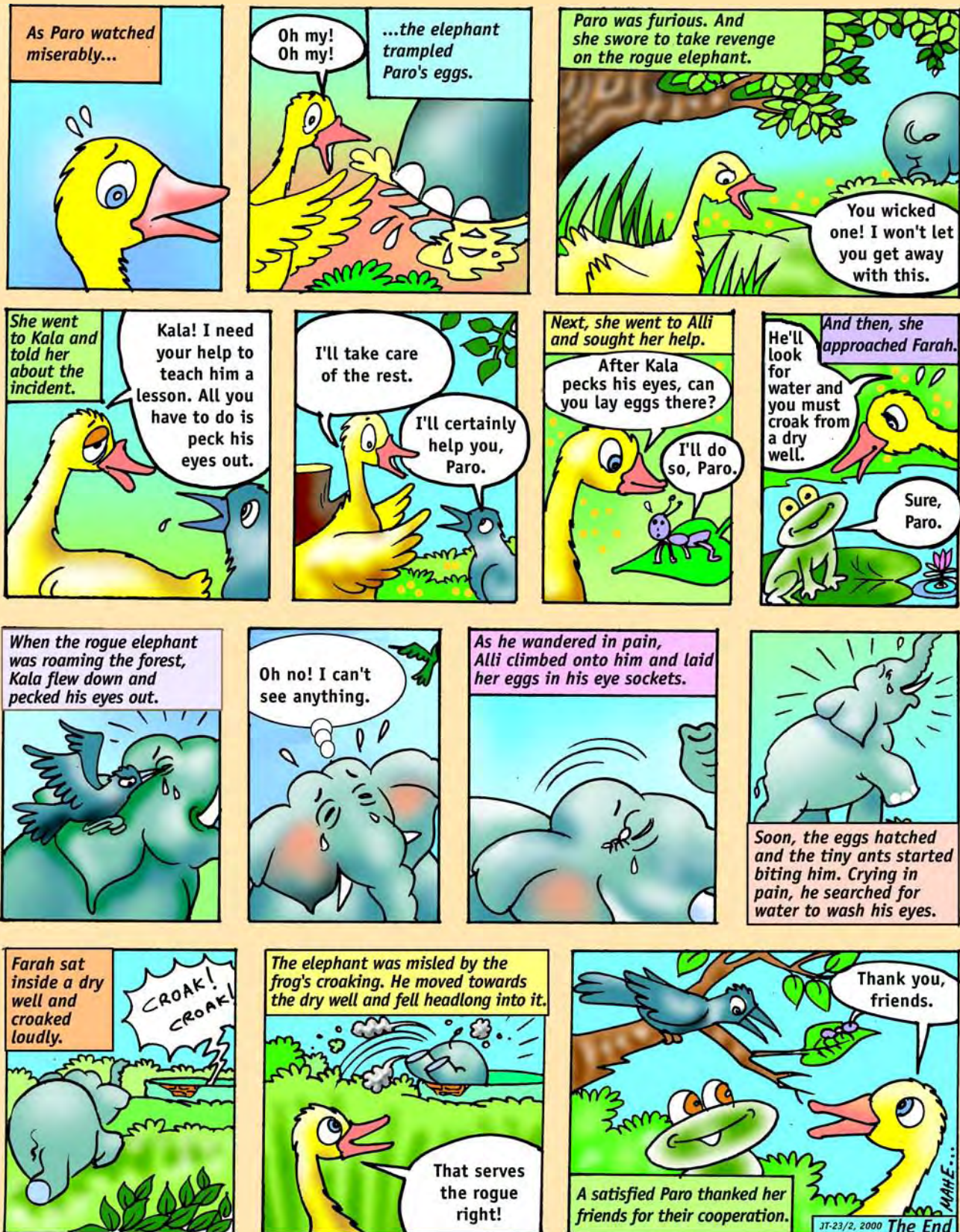
During the 17th and 18th centuries, the Agra cemetery was considered blessed ground by Christians, and the dead were brought here from distant places. Thomas Kerridge must have put himself to considerable expense to bury his friend in Agra. There are over eighty old Armenian graves in the cemetery. The only one that interests me is the tomb of Shah Nazar Khan, an expert in the art of moulding a heavy cannon. One of these, 'Zamzamah', earned a measure of immortality in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*. The gun was 14.6ft long, and is at present in Lahore.

Other historic tombs lie scattered about the cemetery, but the most striking and curious of them is the grave of Colonel Jon Hessing, who died in 1803. It is a miniature Taj Mahal, built of red sandstone. Although small compared to any Mughal tomb, it is large for a Christian grave, and could easily accommodate a living family of moderate proportions. Hessing came to India from Holland, and was one of a colourful band of freelance soldiers (most of them deserters) who served in the Sindhia's Mahratta Army. Hessing, we are told, 'was a good, benevolent man, and a great soldier'. The tomb was built by his wife Alice who, it must be supposed, felt as tenderly towards the Colonel as Shah Jahan felt towards his queen. She could not afford marble. Even so, her 'Taj' is believed to have cost a lakh of rupees.

- Courtesy :
The Heritage







WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE, BUT...

Hari had only a momentary glimpse, but it left him enthralled. It was a double high for him. This was his first aeroplane ride and his destination was Port Blair, the capital town of the famed Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal. The Captain of their flight had just announced that they were nearing Port Blair and the islands were now visible below them.

Hari strained his neck to look down and the sight took his breath away: deep blue waters of the ocean leading into the light, emerald greens of the shallow coastal waters, strips of white sparkling beaches and then the thick forests that the Andamans are so famous for. Hari had not seen such lush green forests before.

What beauty! He exclaimed to himself. "What greenery, Daddy!" he turned to his father who was also straining his neck over Hari's little head to get whatever view he could. "This place must be so pleasant and cool," Hari said, "and I'm sure there are no problems here like we have back home in Chennai." His father merely nodded his head. He was himself so captivated with the blues and greens below that he hardly heard what Hari was saying.

Getting to these far away islands was a dream come true for Hari. They were going there as tourists but with a little difference: their destination was the Institute for Island Ecology (IIE), where scientists had been studying the rich ecological wealth (birds, snakes, plants, sea turtles and also the coral reefs) of the islands for about a decade.

In the next few minutes the plane landed and soon they drove to

'Hotel Blue Islands' where their accommodation had been arranged. Hari was keen on a bath as he had not taken one at home in Chennai. The departure time of their flight was 5.30 a.m. A bath was simply not possible, though that was the only time in the day when their taps had water.

Water did not appear to be a problem in this forest rich land. A nice warm bath was followed by a good breakfast and the father-son duo were ready to leave for the IIE campus located some 20 km from Port Blair. They were soon in the outskirts and the first thing that Hari noticed was that everything was not as green as he had seen from above. There were large brown patches: a number of small hillocks were all barren and there were many fields along the roadside lying fallow.

Immediately something else also caught his eye. In five places, at least, he saw long queues of pots and large blue drums, starting from under a small tap along the road. No people at the taps; only pots and drums waiting for water.

He had to ask, and the answer came from the driver Mutthu. "Water in these taps only for 30 minutes late in the afternoon, sir," he said. "We've a serious water problem in and around Port Blair."

Water problem in an island with tropical rainforests? Hari refused to believe it. "But there was no problem in our hotel," he protested. "I had a good, long bath there."

Mutthu's response hit Hari hard. "That is one of the main problems, sir. The tourists are getting priority. A large part of Port Blair's limited



water supply gets diverted to the hotels and the citizens are badly affected. During March to May, we have water in our taps for only one hour every three days.”

Hari could not believe his ears. “Once in three days!” he exclaimed. “It’s better than this even in Chennai, and this is supposed to be a tropical island system, with heavy rainfall.”

Mutthu nodded his head. “We do have a lot of rain,” he responded, “but the period from November to May is rather dry. This is also the tourist season and the pressure increases with every passing year.”

Hari fell silent for a while. He was upset with himself. “I spent ten minutes in the shower today,” he confessed to his father, “and people here don’t have water to drink! Why is it so?”

His father was himself a little clueless, and taken by surprise at what Mutthu had just told them. “Maybe,” he told Hari, “someone at IIE might have the answer.”

Just then Mutthu brought the car to an abrupt halt. They had reached the beautiful wooded campus of the IIE and Hari was all keen and worked up to get some answers about water in these islands. It was the first question he put to John, a senior scientist at the IIE, when they sat down to chat. “Our driver Mutthu told us there is a serious water problem in Port Blair because of tourists,” he asked. “Is that true?”

John replied in his deep voice and slow tone. “There is a water problem prevailing here and the tourism industry has only made it worse. For many decades now,” he added, “there has been large scale tree felling for the timber industry, and this has affected the islands in a very negative way.” That was exactly the thought which had crossed Hari’s mind when he saw the barren hillocks earlier in the morning. “Also,” John continued, “in 1960 the total population in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands was about 60,000. Large scale migration from mainland India has since then resulted in this figure going up to nearly five lakhs today.”

Hari made a quick calculation. “That’s an increase of nearly 800 per cent in just four decades!” he exclaimed.

“You’re right,” said John, “and while people and their demands have increased, mother Nature cannot necessarily keep up the supply.”



Things became rather simple and straight forward for Hari now. “We shouldn’t have come to this beautiful place, Daddy,” he said with remorse in his voice. “We’re making things only worse and more difficult for the local people and the islands.”

“That’s not a solution,” John said emphatically, almost as if he was scolding Hari. “We, in fact, need more sensitive young people like you, who are able to identify the problem. There are a number of solutions, beginning with careful use of water. If more tourists were careful and minimised their use of water and other resources, the first steps in the right direction will have been taken.”

Hari was still not feeling great, but what John told him made him feel much better. “From now on my bath will be restricted to one bucket of water,” he said. “No more showers for me, not in Port Blair, and not in Chennai.”

“Come, let me show you around the campus,” said John, trying to cheer up Hari. “And tomorrow, when we go to Rutland Island, you’ll see many wonderful aspects of these unique islands.”

A smile returned to Hari’s face and there was a spring in his step as they started their walk around the beautiful campus.

**- By Pankaj Sekhsaria
Kalpavriskh Environmental Action Group**



A TALE FROM HARYANA

THE DANCE WAS A PUNISHMENT!

Hiralal was hardly ten years old when he lost both his parents. They were struck by lightning as they were working in the fields. They were in the employ of a zamindar, who took pity on the little boy. He now began to live with the zamindar's family, who gave him food and a corner in their large house to sleep. The zamindar's wife, though a kind lady, however did not fail to take work from him. He was given all kinds of chores to do. He did not mind attending to whatever work was entrusted to him. After all, he was given food three times a day, and he could rest whenever the family rested. So,

he did not grumble. After two years, the zamindar found Hiralal had grown sturdy and thought he could be more usefully employed on the farm where he had engaged two labourers after the tragic death of Hiralal's parents. He dispensed with the services of one labourer and asked Hiralal to help the other.

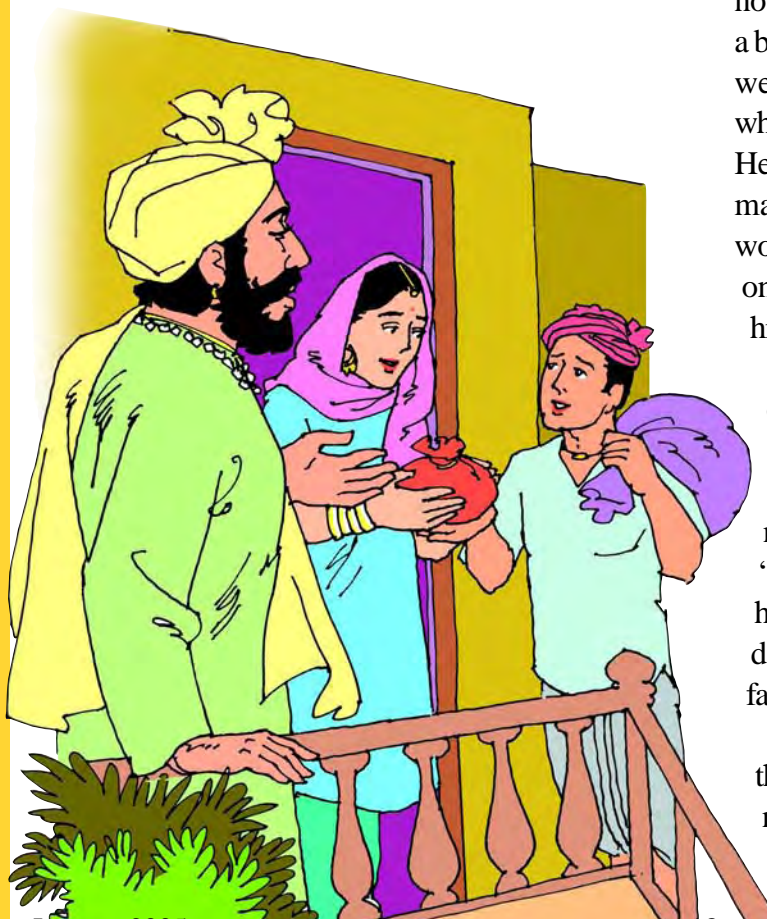
The boy now found that he had to work from morning till evening without any rest, except when he was eating his lunch packed and given to him by the zamindar's wife before he left the house in the morning.

The other farm hand was a lazy fellow and every now and then, he would go and sit down in the shade of a big tree to chew pan that he carried with him. As days went by, the man would also lie down and sleep for a while after ensuring that Hiralal continued with his work. He thought it would not be prudent to complain to his master about the farm-hand. But he decided that he would not continue to stay with the zamindar and work on the farm. He would go somewhere else and live on his own.

So, one fine morning, he made a bundle of his clothes and presented himself before the zamindar. He was surprised to see Hiralal not in the usual dress he put on when he went for work on the farm. He also noticed the bundle slung across the boy's shoulders.. "What's happening? Where are you off to, Hiralal?" he queried with some anxiety. The anxiety was over his doubt how he would find a substitute to work on his farm.

"Babuji, I'm grateful to you for looking after me for the last five years. Now I must look after myself. I shall never forget whatever you've done for me."

"That's all right, Hiralal, but tell me, where are



you going?" asked the zamindar, controlling his shock and disappointment.

"Sir, I wish to go to Benares and find some work there. I'm told Benares is a big place, bigger than this village, and finding work will not be difficult."

"But, Hiralal, don't you know Benares is a long way off?" The zamindar tried to remind him. "You'll take many days to reach there. How will you manage till then?"

"I've thought of that, Babuji," said Hiralal. "You can help me by giving my wages of the last five years."

The zamindar was taken aback for a few moments. He wanted time to think. "But, are you sure you want to go away from here?"

"Yes, master, I've made up my mind." Hiralal sounded quite resolute.

"All right, then," said the zamindar. "As you wish." He then went inside and came back with five silver coins.

"Take these coins, one for each year of your service. Go, if you must, but remember, you can always come back if ever you wish to," said the zamindar.

Hiralal wondered, five silver coins were too little compared to the kind of chores he had done in the zamindar's household for two years and the work he did on the farm for three years. However, he decided not to argue or bargain, now that he had decided to leave the zamindar's service once and for all. He thanked the zamindar, took leave of him with folded hands and was about to step out when the zamindar's wife came out with the usual lunch parcel. "Here, take this, Hiralal, you won't feel hungry for a day."

Hiralal bowed low, looked at her face with gratitude, and silently moved out. He did not feel sorry that he was leaving the comforts of the zamindar's house. The boy walked and walked, without any idea for how many days he would have to walk before he reached Benares. He had heard a lot about that big city, where he decided his fortunes lay.

Towards dusk, he felt tired. He searched and found a place beneath a huge banyan tree where he could stretch his legs and sleep. A few steps away he found an old



man already lying down, trying to get some sleep. He had matted hair, which he had tied up in a knot on his head; he was wearing clothes torn all over.

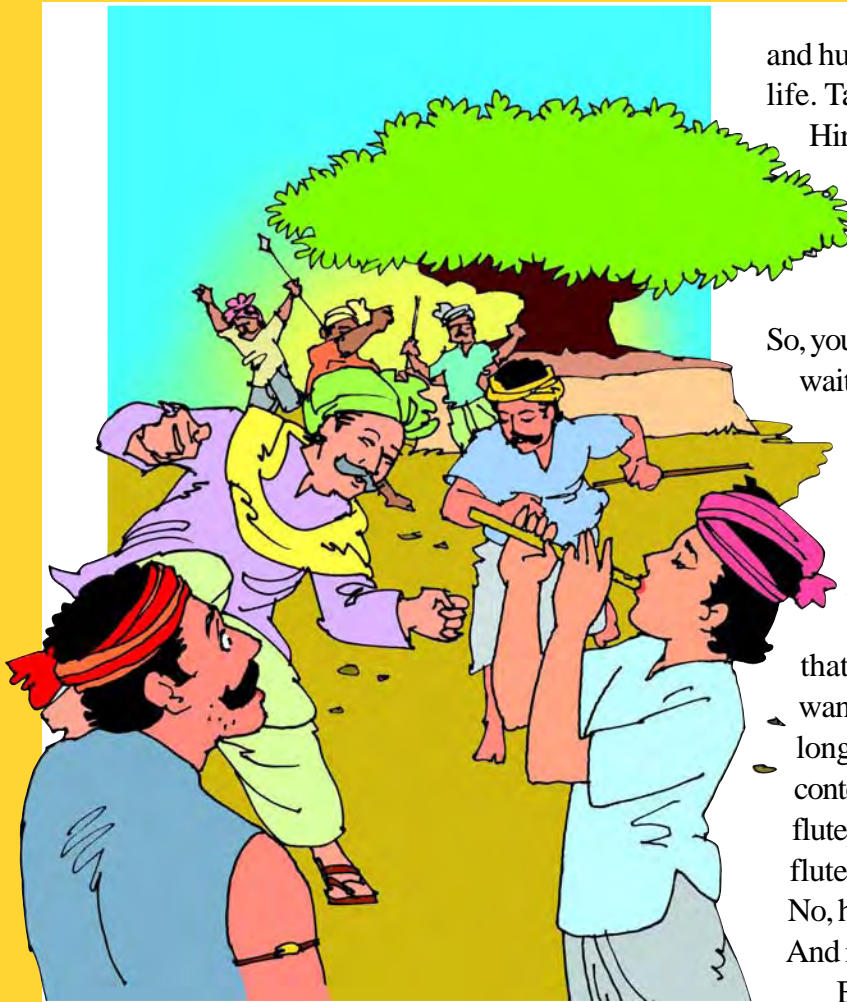
On seeing the boy, he got up and struck a conversation. Hiralal was soon pouring out his story and telling him of his ambition to find work in Benares. A faint smile came over the old man's face. "Son, at last you've come. I was all the while waiting to share my wisdom with you."

The word share reminded Hiralal of the packet of food the kind-hearted wife of the zamindar had given him. He now brought it out and offered a part of the food to the old man. As the two ate, Hiralal wondered what kind of wisdom his newfound guru would impart to him.

"You're weary after a long walk and you need rest," said the old man. "I shall impart wisdom to you when you're fresh in the morning." He lay down and was soon asleep. Hiralal went back to where he had left his bundle. Soon he was also fast asleep.

Next morning he and the old man sat together for a long time when the latter told him of his own experiences and what made him renounce the world and all worldly things. "My only possession now is this," he said as he pulled out from his bag a flute made of sandalwood. He gave it to Hiralal.

The boy took the flute in his hands and said, "But I don't know how to play, O Wise One!"



“Ah! I haven’t yet told you about it,” responded the old man. “You’ve only to blow into it, and the flute will bring out music. Anyone who listens to the music will start dancing, that’s the power of its music. But don’t call it a magic flute, for it cannot perform any other magic. Anyone who starts dancing will stop only when *you* stop blowing. And he would then want to offer something in return for the joy the music provided. Thus the flute will take care of your needs.”

Hiralal prostrated himself before the old man, took his blessings and started on his way. Suddenly he heard a birdsong, and he was tempted to play the flute. He did not know someone was listening to the flute, till he saw a man looking like a ruffian get up and dance to the tunes that floated from the flute.

The boy was excited and continued to blow into the flute, and the man, now looking not so fearsome, went on dancing. Soon, he appeared exhausted from dancing and Hiralal stopped playing. The man walked up to Hiralal

and hugged the boy. “I’ve never felt such peace in my life. Take all these jewels.” He opened a bundle and Hiralal saw glittering necklaces, bangles, rings and studs.

“I’m a robber,” the man said, “and I had taken these from several houses. I’ve decided to leave thieving and I don’t have any use for them. So, you may take them. You’ll find them useful.” Without waiting for any response from the boy, he pushed the bundle into his hands and ran away. Hiralal stood still for sometime till he moved away from the place. He put back the wealth that came to him so unexpectedly in his bundle and secured it safe. And he moved forward.

Unfortunately, Hiralal was too young to know that the robber, like the legendary leopard never wanting to change its spots, would not keep quiet for long. As he ran away from the boy, he was furiously contemplating how he would retrieve his loot from the fluteplaying youngster. He first thought of stealing the flute itself. But, he did not know how to play a flute. No, he should only try to deprive the boy of the jewels. And it should not look like another robbery.

By now he had reached the next village. He disguised himself as a merchant and went straight to the village chief, the *sarpanch*. He cooked up a story and ended his narration saying, “This chit of a boy thus tricked me and stole my jewels. I’m ruined!” He managed to bring out some crocodile tears which trickled down his cheeks.

“Don’t worry, my good friend,” assured the village chief, “the boy cannot avoid going through this village. We will apprehend him when he comes here.” He then arranged for some stout and strong villagers to catch hold of the boy and take him to the *sarpanch*.

Hiralal saw a crowd even at the entrance to the village. He was surprised, but his surprise soon gave into shock when he saw that some of them were also armed with sticks and spears. He realised that any resistance was out of the question; so he meekly allowed himself to be tied by his hands and almost dragged to the presence of the village chief.

“What have I done, sir?” asked Hiralal, humbly.

“As if you don’t know!” said the *sarpanch* with a sneer. “Here’s my friend whom you have robbed. Where are his jewels? Take them out!”

“I shall, but first let my hands be free,” said Hiralal boldly. The villagers untied his hands. Once they were free, the boy first pulled out the flute and began blowing into it. Out came some haunting music and everybody in the courtyard, including the *sarpanch* and the man posing as the village chief’s friend, began to dance. The latter managed to howl, “No, don’t allow him to play the flute! He’ll never stop!”

The *sarpanch* did not understand what the man meant. Had he met the boy earlier? Otherwise, how did he know about the boy’s flute? Meanwhile, more villagers had been attracted by the enchanting music and they all came and joined the crowd in dancing. Hiralal continued to blow, and blow hard he did. He expected the robber, whom he had recognised by now, to make the next move.

“STOP, please! Stop!” he cried aloud. “Let me confess to my crime!”

Hiralal took his lips off the flute. The robber waited till his panting stopped and then blurted out: “He’s not a

thief! I’m the one who robbed people of their jewels. What he has in his bag is the loot I gave to him to make him stop playing the flute. He has already punished me, and I don’t want any of you to be punished!”

The *sarpanch* heaved a great sigh of relief. By then, Hiralal had pulled out the bag of jewels given to him by the robber before he ran away from him. The boy placed it before the *sarpanch* and said, “He promised to stop thieving before he pushed the bag into my hands. Make him promise again in front of all of you that he would turn a new leaf in his life.”

The robber took a solemn promise. The *sarpanch* told him, “We are now allowing you to go free, but see that you are not caught red-handed!”

The crowd just waited to see him disappear from view when they cheered Hiralal. “You’re our hero! Please remain with us in this village for ever!”

The *sarpanch* then said, “Come on, Hiralal! You must first share our food. We shall later fix up a place for your stay here.”

Hiralal was happy, as there was now no question of his finding a weary way to Benares.



A STITCH IN TIME

Little Rahul was playing with his friends in the park when he fell down. His head hit a sharp stone. There was pandemonium as blood flowed profusely from a deep gash on his forehead. Fortunately, his mother Seema was present in the park. Other adults and children came running to help and Rahul was rushed to the nearby clinic. As luck would have it, this

was a posh, super-speciality clinic run by the highly qualified Dr. Mohan. He promptly attended to the boy and expertly stitched up the gaping wound.

Antibiotics and painkillers were given. At the end, Seema enquired, “Doctor, your fees...?” Dr. Mohan replied, “Six hundred and fifty rupees – fifty rupees for consultation and six hundred rupees for the six stitches!”

“Oh!” said Seema as if she got a shock. “I’m deeply grateful for one thing, Doctor...” she paused.

“Yes?” asked the doctor, expecting a further declaration of gratitude for his quick medical care.

“I’m thankful,” went on Seema, “that you are not my tailor!”

GLIMPSES OF THE DEVI BHAGAVATAM

The princes, who had been invited to the Swayamvaram, responded thus: “Do not bother to entertain us, O King Subahu. You have passed a sleepless night. Go and take some rest.” He returned to his castle.

Inside the castle, preparations were afoot for the bride’s journey to her husband’s place. Some friendly princes whispered to the king, “Please don’t let the couple leave the castle now. The enemy, like a pack of hungry wolves, is waiting to pounce upon them.”

The king was, naturally, in favour of detaining the couple. But Sudarshan told him, “O King, don’t have any fear for of us. The Divine Mother will protect us. I shall lead your daughter safely to my hut. I’ve no palace. But my forest is in no way less attractive than any palace.”

The king did not like to stand in his way. He bade them farewell. A regiment of his army accompanied them.

Even then King Subahu was not without anxiety. He,

too, followed them. Outside the town, Yudhajit lay in ambush with his soldiers and a few foolish princes. “Here they come!” He shouted when he sighted Sudarshan’s chariot. With his sword drawn, he leaped up from hiding. King Subahu did not take long to recognise his voice. He jumped forward and faced him.

Fighting broke out. Sudarshan, calm and composed, prayed to the Divine Mother calling for Her intervention. Suddenly, to everybody’s surprise, there appeared a luminous female figure riding a lion, in the very midst of the battle.

Yudhajit’s elephants panicked at the sight of the ferocious lion. “Look here, my soldiers, the Divine Mother is here to protect us. Go forward fearlessly and destroy the enemy!” shouted Sudarshan.

“What! Should you get frightened at the sight of a woman, a prince without a kingdom, and an old king? Come on, let’s crush them!” shouted Yudhajit, addressing his soldiers and the few princess who had joined him.

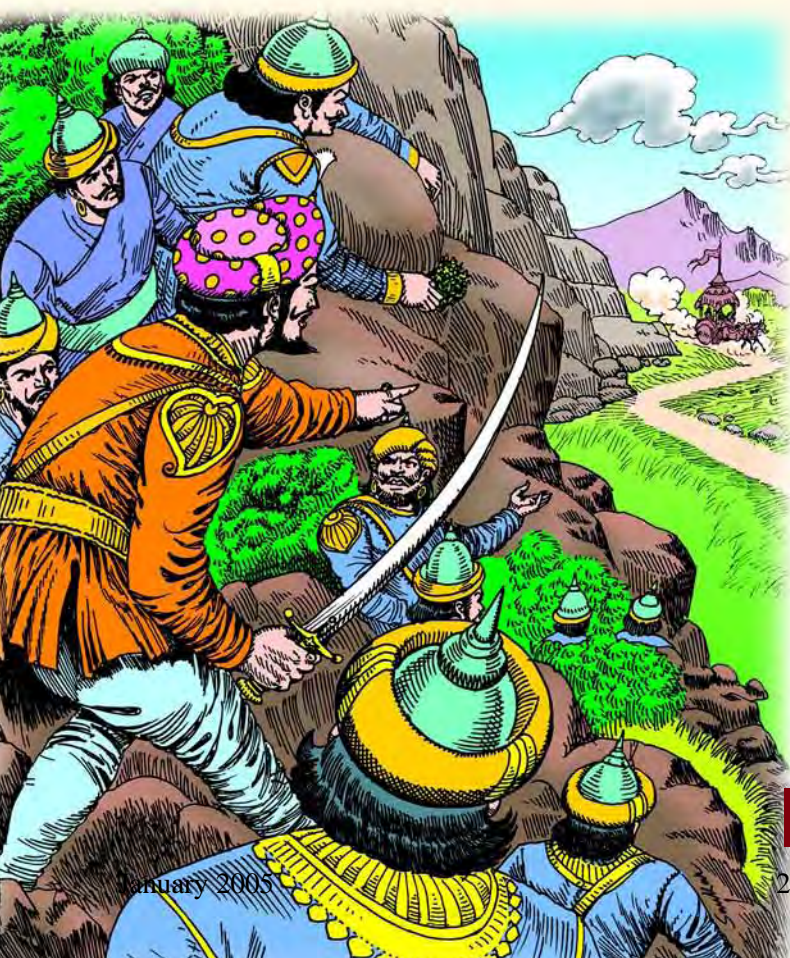
He had hardly finished giving out his call when he was struck by a lethal arrow. He fell down and died instantly. Next to fall was his grandson and Sudarshan’s step-brother the young Shatrujit.

Many of Yudhajit’s soldiers and collaborators died at the hands of King Subahu and Prince Sudarshan. The rest fled. Soon all was quiet.

Subahu prostrated himself before the Goddess. “Mother! Now that you have come to my rescue so compassionately, be pleased to dwell forever in the city of Kashi. I am told Kashi will remain as long as the earth remains. My prayer is, you be in Kashi as long as Kashi is there!”

The Goddess agreed.

Sudarshan and his bride, too, prostrated themselves before the Goddess. “Mother! I would have been



nowhere but for your Grace. Kindly tell me what I should do now.”

“Go to Ayodhya and ascend the throne. Rule the kingdom with truth and justice. You’ll always have my protection,” said the Goddess.

Those princes who were returning from Kashi got an opportunity to behold the Goddess. They were overwhelmed. After the wondrous vision disappeared, they told Sudarshan, “It is because of you that we had had this fortune. We’ll ever remain grateful to you.”

Sudarshan and Shashikala took leave of King Subahu and proceeded to Ayodhya. Some of the friendly princes went as their escorts. The news of Shatrujit’s death and Sudarshan’s victorious march had already reached Ayodhya. The ministers and the nobility organised a grand reception for the prince and his bride.

Thousands of men and women gathered at the entrance to the city to welcome the couple. There was sweet music. The crowd burst into loud cheers when Sudarshan’s chariot was sighted.

Sudarshan greeted them and then went to meet his stepmother. He bowed to her and said, “Mother, I’m sorry for the death of your son, Shatrujit, and your father.

They brought about their death themselves. I had never meant any harm to them.”

After a pause, he said, again, “I lost my father when I was an infant. My mother and I had to flee on account of your father’s wrath. He even killed my noble grandfather, King Virsen. On our way to find some shelter we were robbed by bandits. But I have learnt to look upon all these misfortunes as the play of destiny.

I nurse no ill-will towards anyone—least of all for you. My attitude to you will be like my attitude to my own mother.”

Tears welling out of her eyes, Queen Leelavati said, “My son, my father had harassed you and killed your grandfather despite my prevailing upon him not to do so. He has paid for his wicked actions. I lost my son on account of his arrogance. You are my only hope and solace. I used to look upon your mother as my own elder sister. I shall continue doing the same.”

Amidst great festivities Sudarshan was declared the king. The first thing he did thereafter was to erect a golden throne and to install the image of the Divine Mother in it. A day did not pass without offering his sincere prayers to the Goddess. He ruled his kingdom with truth and justice.

(To continue)





The story of Chandni Chowk

With the building of the new city around the Red Fort, all the members of the royal family came forward with their personal contributions. You already know about the garden laid out by Princess Jahan Ara. She also laid out the Urdu Bazar near the newly built Jima Masjid. But what is really remembered to this day is the large chowk or square planned by her, with a large pool in the centre. It was called “Chandni Chowk”. The pool is no longer in existence. Today’s visitors might wonder about the name. What had moonlight to do with this crowded and congested shopping centre, the largest in the capital? Needless to say, the newly put up

Shahjahanabad was not crowded like the present city of Delhi! Besides, after the square was built, Jahan Ara had a large pool constructed in the centre. It was watered by the canal built by the royal architect Ali Mardan. This canal flowed through the entire length of the main road.

Nearly all the historians of this period tell us how the Chandni Chowk got its name. Here is what Khushwant Singh writes in his *Delhi: A Portrait* : “A canal flanked by trees on either side ran at the centre of this bazaar, widening into a tank in the middle. On moonlit nights the canal and the pool were resplendent with the reflected glory of the moon. So the

bazaar came to be known as Chandni Chowk, the moonlit square.” The canal was a real boon to the people of Shahjahanabad because it supplied their drinking water.”

No wonder, the nobility and the wealthy had their mansions built around the square. Shops sprang up all around. Chandni Chowk soon became the most fashionable locality in the Mughal empire. It was also a prosperous trade centre attracting traders from many countries. Fruit shops sold the choicest of fruits from Afghanistan and Kashmir; jewellers offered all kinds of gems and ornaments. There were shops selling from hookahs to all kinds of weapons.

Nawab Durgah Quli Bahadur, in his memoir, mentions an interesting story about shopping in Chandni Chowk. A young noble, who had just lost his father, wanted to go shopping in Chandni



Chowk and sought his mother's permission. The woman burst into tears and said, "O my son, your father has not left you enough money for you to go shopping in Chandni Chowk. But, since you want it so badly, please take a lakh of rupees which is all I can spare. It will enable you to buy a few token gifts after you have gone round the shops." Just imagine! Some people actually spent one lakh rupees for buying just token gifts even in those days!

Much later, in 1837 an English woman, Emma Roberts, writes in her diary that Chandni Chowk often "echoed with the shrill roar of many caged cheetahs and also hunting leopards. There were Persian cats and greyhounds also for sale, while the trumpeting of elephants mingled with the sounds of cartwheels and itinerant musicians."

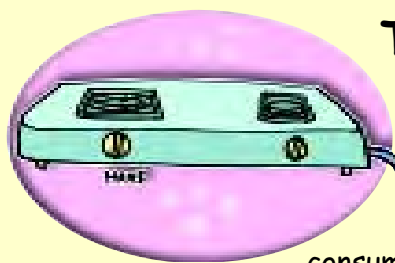
Chandni Chowk has the distinction of having an amazing number of places of worship belonging to all the major religions - Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, Sikhism and Jainism. There is an interesting story about one of them - a Jain temple then known as 'Urdu Mandir' because it was in the Urdu Bazar. It was established during the reign of Shah Jahan, soon after Chandni Chowk came up. When Aurangzeb was in power he banned all forms of music in the city. He ordered that the temple drums should not be beaten any more. But he was livid with rage to find that no one paid any heed to his command. The drum player in the temple continued to beat his drum loud and strong.

Aurangzeb commanded his soldiers to capture the drum player and haul him before the emperor. But strangely enough no one succeeded in catching him. The drums went on playing as before. No matter how many men the soldiers captured, there always seemed to be a drum player in the temple. Finally, angry and exasperated, Aurangzeb himself entered the temple determined to catch the player. But when he went in, he discovered to his utter astonishment that there was no drum player. In fact, there was no one at all in the temple! And yet the drums were playing! Aurangzeb returned to his apartments in the Red Fort and never mentioned the subject again. The drummer continued playing his

instrument merrily. The temple is now popularly known as "Jain Mandir".

Even now Chandni Chowk is an important shopping area. The original arcade built in the shape of a half moon is now a bazaar of mixed splendour and squalor, crammed with shops of all kinds. The narrow alleys and bylanes specialize in different things, from cycle parts to intricate jewellery, from *parathas* to silverware. In fact, it is said to be one of the country's best known wholesale markets for ornaments, textiles, electronic goods and watches. An admirable study in contrasts, visiting the Chandni Chowk, despite its crowd and din, is an experience not to be missed if ever you visit the country's capital.

- By Swapna Dutta



To save fuel

A cooking gas stove has a big burner and a small burner.

The small burner consumes 6 to 10 per cent

less gas than the big burner! An experiment with cooking 250gm potatoes revealed that the small burner consumed 6.5 per cent less gas, but took 7 minutes longer than the big burner. Similarly in a kerosene stove, by cooking on lower flame, one needs use of less fuel.

To cut down costs

Tests conducted on a large number of motor cars prove that one can save fuel as much as 6 per cent

by tuning the car regularly. If the engine emits black smoke, has poor pulling power or consumes large quantities of oil, get it checked immediately. A delay may prove more expensive in terms of petrol and oil as compared to the cost of an overhaul.

- Courtesy:PCRA





- By Rosscote
Krishna Pillai

January born-S.N. Bose

Renowned as the discoverer of “Bose-Einstein” quantum statistics and elementary particles called “bosons”, Satyendra Nath Bose was born on New Year day of 1894 in Calcutta (now Kolkata). To his parents, Surendra Nath Bose, an accountant in railways and a lover of books, and Amodini Devi, he was the only son among six daughters.

As a student in both school, and college for his B.Sc. and M.Sc., Satyen always topped in almost all examinations. His forte was mathematics right from his boyhood. His teacher in school, who once gave him 110 marks out of 100, prophesied that he would become a great mathematician. He took his M.Sc. when he was only 21.

In 1916, Bose was appointed lecturer in Applied Mathematics in Calcutta University. Soon he was transferred to the Physics Department, although he had studied physics only for his B.Sc. degree. But he devotedly pursued a study of modern physics and began carrying out intensive research in theoretical physics.

Bose moved over to the newly-established Dacca University (now in Bangladesh) in 1921 on his appointment as Reader in Physics. He continued his research and three years later, he sent his paper, “Planck’s Law and Light Quantum Hypothesis”, which later brought him fame, to Einstein who wrote: “In my opinion, Bose’s derivation of the Planck formula signifies an important development.” This paper introduced new concepts in physics and quantum statistics, which Einstein applied to his own work on ideal gases. This field of study thus came to be known as “Bose-Einstein statistics”.

Einstein’s recognition brought Bose into the limelight in the world of physics. Bose now felt keen to work under Einstein. In 1925, he went to Berlin and met Einstein and other great men of science, like Otto Hahn, Pauli, Haber, Geiger and Heisenberg. Bose was greatly benefited in his future work by these contacts. When he returned to Dacca in 1926, he was made Professor of Physics.

After 24 years, Bose could go back to his *alma mater*, Calcutta University, as Professor of Physics, in 1945. He did outstanding work on unified field theory which was reckoned as a very great advance in that field. Bose got rewards and recognition from various quarters. In 1958, the world of science recognized his contributions by electing him a Fellow of the Royal Society (F.R.S.). In 1959, the Government of India appointed him National Professor.

When he was 62, he retired from Calcutta University and became Vice-Chancellor of Viswabharati University. In January 1974, when he was 80 years old, speaking at a seminar in Calcutta, Bose gave expression to his feeling of great satisfaction with the words: “Now I feel I do not need to live any longer.” He passed away on February 4.



Basic Forces in Nature

The 2004 Nobel Laureates in Physics are all from the U.S.A.: David Gross, David Politzer, and Frank Wilczek. Their path-breaking work in physics leads to an ultimate understanding of the *basic forces in Nature and how they work*.

The four basic forces in Nature, which physicists have so far identified and designated are gravity and what they call three "interactions". The interactions are the electromagnetic, the weak and the strong.

The force of gravity is rather well known and has been studied in depth from the days of Isaac Newton. The other three forces relate to the interaction between the smallest objects in Nature. It has been known that "quarks" are the smallest particles of matter which join together and form protons and neutrons in the nucleus of an atom. Atoms combine to form molecules which then form the building blocks of matter in the Universe.

The three physics laureates have discovered a property of quarks called "asymptotic freedom" and formulated a theory called "Quantum ChromoDynamics" (QCD). According to this theory, the force that acts between quarks, which are found to exist only as aggregates of two or three as protons or neutrons, is one of the basic forces in Nature called "strong interaction" or "colour interaction". This property of quarks explains why quarks may behave almost as free particles only at high energies. This discovery, as mentioned above, will lead to a very clear understanding of how the basic forces in Nature work.



Wilczek



David Gross



Politzer

Sitting on an atom

Because it all happened so quickly, we don't realize how completely science has invaded our homes. Nor how much more it will invade them in the future. Most of us take it for granted, without even understanding what it is all about—like the woman, who overheard us talking about the domestic use of atomic energy. 'Nonsense!', she protested. 'I wouldn't have an atom in the house.' 'Excuse me,' I interposed, 'but you are sitting on an atom!' She squeaked and leaped out of her chair. I then had to explain all about atoms. How everything is made up of atoms, her chair, herself, the air she was breathing.

Ritchie **Calder** in "Science in Our Lives."

Science Quiz

1. Who invented the incandescent electric lamp?
a. Faraday b. Newton c. Edison
d. Alexander Graham Bell
2. Who proposed the first modern computer?
a. Einstein b. Samuel Morse c. Volta
d. Charles Babbage
3. What is a laughing jackass?
a. a bird b. donkey c. fox d. mule
4. How many arms does a starfish usually have?
a. two b. five c. none d. ten
5. How many moons or satellites does Venus have?
a. two b. one c. four d. none

Answers: 1. Edison, 2. Babbage 3. a bird (found in Australia, known for its raucous crackling 4. five 5. none



Newsflash

FAVOURITE NAMES

A CHILD CAMPAIGNER

Voices are often heard against employing children for work in factories, hotels, and even households. The governments—both at the Centre and in States—have taken many steps to ban child labour. However, it is found that the pernicious practice has not been wiped out. Ten year old Michalle S.Kumar, a 4th Class student of a

residential school in Attingal, near Trivandrum, rode on his bicycle from the Kerala capital to Kasargode in the north of the State, spreading awareness of the need to eradicate child labour. He started on his bicycle-yatra on November 14 last and concluded his campaign a fortnight later.

Besides speaking to crowds en route, he would sing, dance and enact his own scripts. He was prompted to resort to this solo yatra when he saw how a little boy was made to look after an elephant! And he was not the son of any mahout.



If it is a male child, Indian parents in the USA would plump for Aditya; and when they are blessed with a daughter, their preference is Shreya. This has been reported by the Department of Social Security, which found that in 2003, as many as 254 boys were named Aditya and 311 female babies were called Shreya.

The next popular names were Amiya for male babies and Asha for female children. Arjun is another favourite with Indian residents.

38th appearance

Haven't you read the story of the Scottish hero Robert Bruce who was defeated by the British seven times, and he learnt perseverance from a spider in a cave trying to weave its web? You may like to call Shiv Dhavan Yadav of Rajasthan the modern Robert Bruce! He wrote the 10th Class examination 37 times and failed every time. He is now preparing for yet another attempt in March-April this year. He first appeared for the Final exam when he was 18. His parents, who were sure of his success, went about fixing his marriage. He is now 56 and remains unmarried!



KALEIDOSCOPE

THE 'HEAD'HOG

Once there was a hedgehog called Max. He wanted to cross the busy road to tell his friend Sam that the monsters were coming to get him. But he forgot the Green Cross code. He saw his friend on the path near the road. Sam told Max about the Green Cross code. The Green Cross code is about crossing the road safely. Sam told Max to go to a zebra crossing, look both ways, and then cross. Now Max uses his head to cross the road by remembering the Green Cross code.



Abhiram Magesh (6), Ascot, England

HOLIDAY TENSION

My father works for a bank. He has a holiday on Mondays and works on Sundays. It was one such Sunday. My mother woke me up and hurried me to get ready for school. I brushed, bathed, combed and put on the school dress. I gobbled up my breakfast and got ready for school in a hurry. I waited for my school bus at the gate. It never came. My mother then took me to the school in her scooty at breakneck speed. On reaching the school, we realised it was a Sunday! Thanks to my father's working days, we were confused.

Sandhya B. (10), Bangalore



FLOWERS

Flowers are all splendour
How do I wonder!
They are in different phase
Their beauty is shown in face
They have different colours
While they use fragrance as power
People have enemies
But you don't have any
You are a gift from God
A great who likes you is the Lord
So flowers are all splendour
How do I wonder!

Shwetha Vasudevan (11), Chennai



SUNSHINE

When the sun came shining through the sky,
The tired people were walking by
Now it's almost two,
The children are going home, too.
When the sun goes down
And paints red my town,
The valleys are calm,
And so is the farm.
By day the pretty flowers bloom
And take away the people's gloom
The sunset is a beautiful scene,
The best thing I have ever seen.

Hita Rangarajan (9), Chennai



THE ADVENTURES OF **G-man**



**THE BIG THIRST
PART - II**

POWER SUPPLY FOR



Visit: www.parleproducts.com



The story so far... A mysterious water-borne epidemic is spreading across the world. Humans, animals, plants... all have fallen victim. Read on...

Suryaraj eats his favourite energy food, a pack of **PARLE-G**.

Legend has it that Suryaraj absorbs light for a fraction of a second

from the sun before he becomes the G-man. That probably explains why it gets dark for a second...

And why no one can see the transformation.



G-man

The Destroyer of all Evil.

G-man transforms into a ball of fire and takes off.



POWER SUPPLY FOR

G-man



Visit: www.parleproducts.com



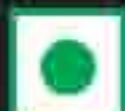
The ball of fire comes to the water tank



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You dare
play games with
the mighty
Glugga!

I
always liked
water sports...
Glugga.

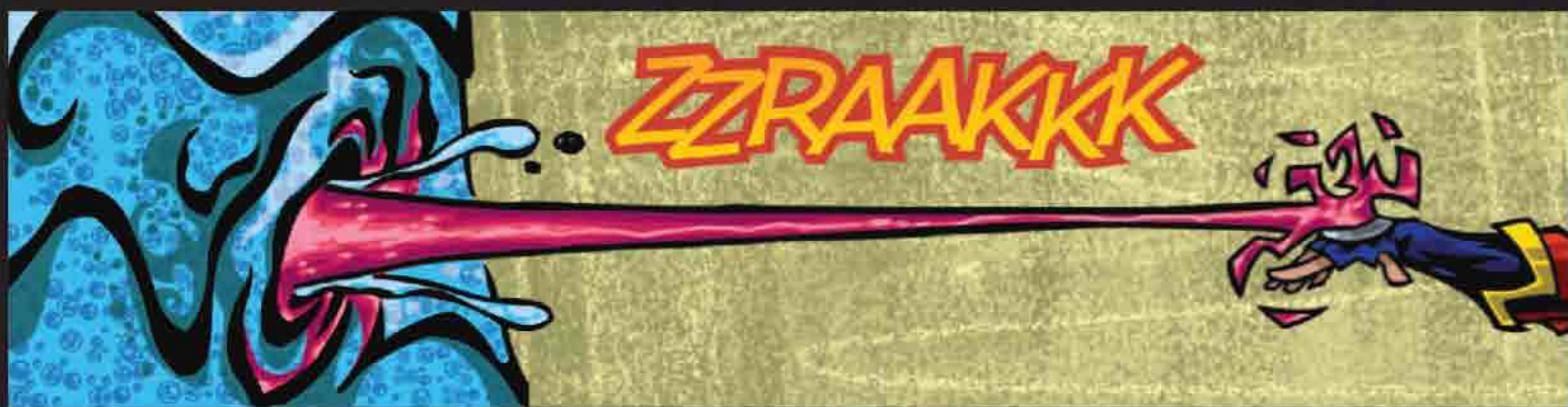
Now for
round two.

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G-man turns into a flaming ball of fire.



How long can
you keep this up.
I'll get you
sooner or later.

G-man seems to have other plans though.



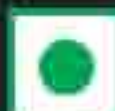
If you paid more
attention during science
class you would understand
what I'm doing my friend.



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G-man uses high-energy heat to transform the Water Monster into steam.



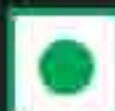
Another disaster is averted by the quick thinking of G-man.



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Major Suryaraj seems to have missed another spectacular performance by G-man.



Suryaraj,
G-man saved the
world again.
It's really a
miracle.

I don't
think so. If only
more people boiled
their drinking water,
none of this
would happen.



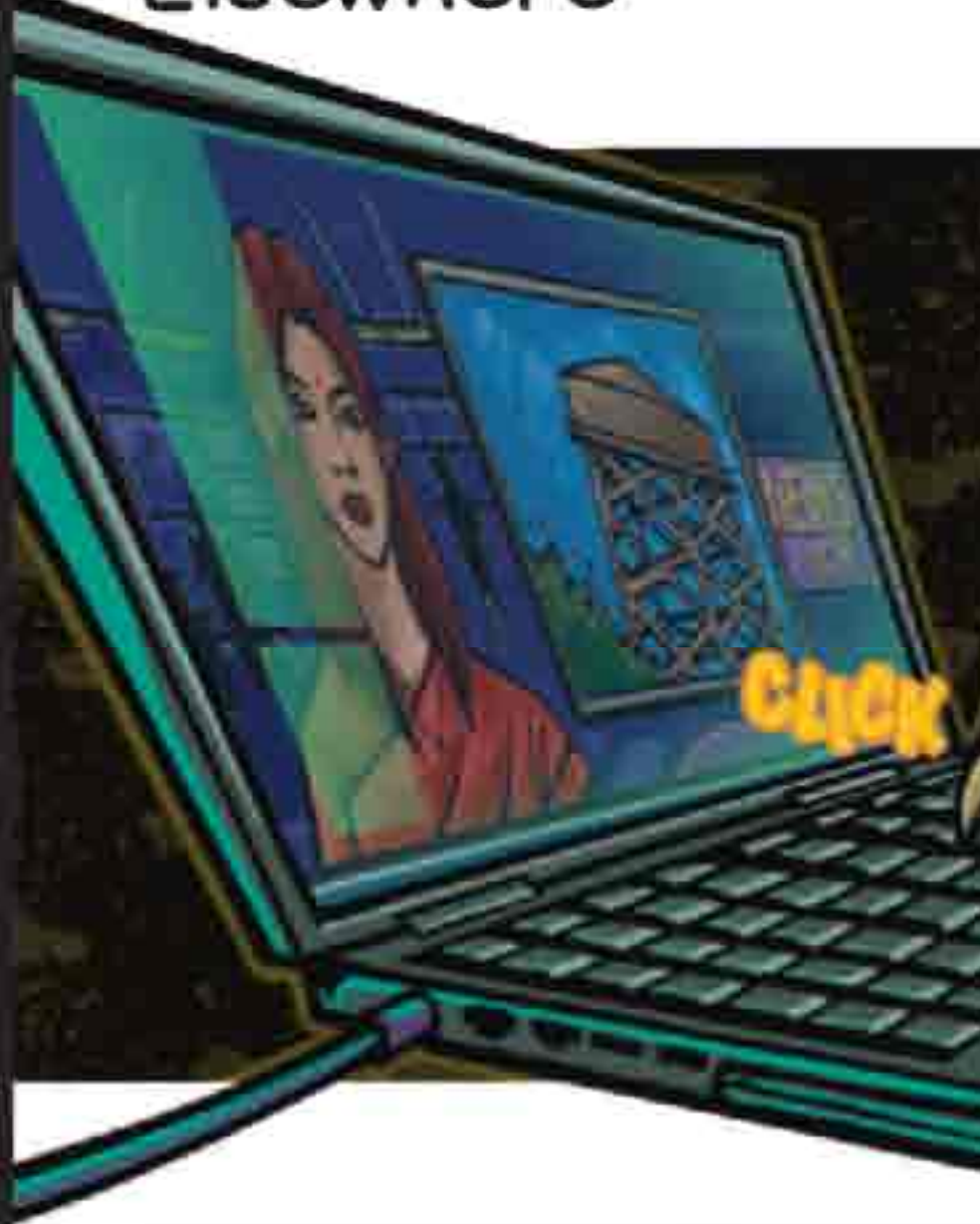
The water crisis has been resolved. Life is now back to normal.



G-man
nearly lost his
life, before he
evaporated the Water
Monster Glugga.

NEWS
at 9

Elsewhere



Hmm!
With my help,
Glugga won't fail
a second time!!



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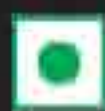
The G-Man Quiz

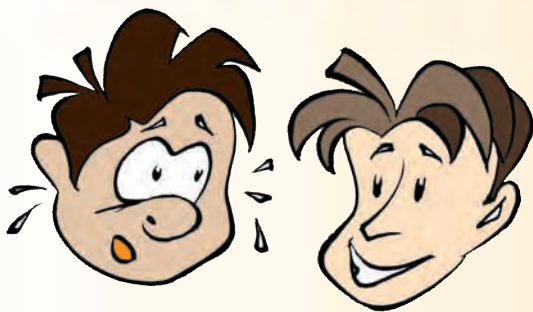
1. G-man is really _____
 - a. Amrish Puri
 - b. Major Suryaraj
 - c. Terrolene
2. The building that Terrolene lives in is _____
 - a. Mallory Towers
 - b. The Petrona Towers
 - c. The T-Tower
3. Major Suryaraj is a _____ when he is not G-man
 - a. Teacher
 - b. Barber
 - c. Cactus
4. The Major become G-man when he eats _____
 - a. A Papaya
 - b. Parle G
 - c. Gajjar ka halwa
5. G-man's companion is _____
 - a. The Orb
 - b. His right hand
 - c. Moti, the wonder dog

Ans: 1-b, 2-c, 3-a, 4-b, 5-a



POWER SUPPLY FOR SUPERHEROES





Shyam : I bet, my father can beat your father.

Ram : I bet, none can touch a single hair on my father's head.

Shyam : Why, is he a wrestler?

Ram : No, he's bald!

Prabhat (10), Bangalore

Beggar : Please help me to buy some food. I haven't had any lunch for a week.

Passer-by : Then how did you survive?

Beggar : I ate only breakfast and dinner.

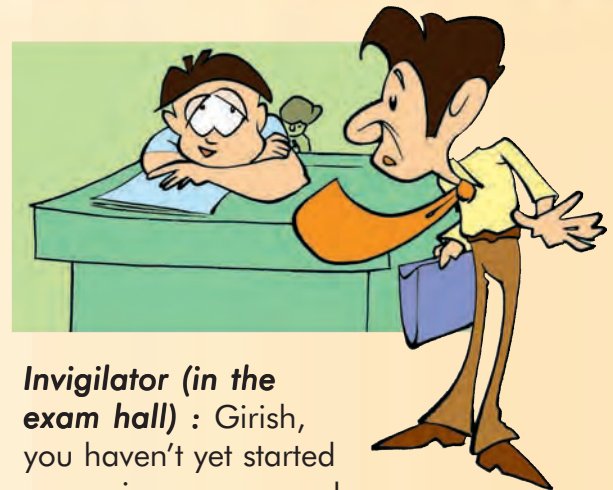


S. Vismita Katyayani (11), Bangalore

Hari : Why do astronauts carry oxygen with them?

Ramesh : Because there is no tree in space to give oxygen.

**Sunita Pal (14),
Nayagarh**



Invigilator (in the exam hall) : Girish, you haven't yet started answering your paper! You'll fail in the exam.

Girish : Sir, I was studying all through last night. I'm now taking rest.

Prashant S. Pai (13), Alike



Two visitors from Greece went to watch a game of cricket. After sometime one turned to the other, "Do you have any idea what game they are playing?"

His companion replied : No, it's all English to me!

**Chandrasekhar Padhi (8),
Bhubaneswar**

FLAG 'EM DOWN!

Not long ago, the British Empire was so vast that “the sun never set” there. One by one the colonies gained independence, and now they are members of what has come to be called the Commonwealth. Given below are the flags of four of these erstwhile colonies with that of the United Kingdom. Try to identify them by their flags.

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



ONE PLUS THREE PUZZLE

Given below are the first letter of a word and a clue for the next three letters which form another word. Example : PANT (ANT)

Find the second word with the help of the clue, which is for the 4-letter word.

1. S _ _ _ You should not jump here, but you may go and buy your needs.
2. H _ _ _ If you are unwell, you should not attempt to climb it.
3. P _ _ _ You need it for writing, but you seldom use it.
4. D _ _ _ You may like to engage yourself in one of these activities, though not in a hurry!
5. L _ _ _ You would like to help somebody, but that should not be a final contact.
6. P _ _ _ Both words are associated with a doctor.

R. Sivasubramanyan, Chennai

RIDDLES



1. Five dozen keys, but not one will open a door.

2. What stays in a corner but can travel around the world?

3. A white man has a black hat. Who is he?

4. Which word is always pronounced wrongly?



- Flag 'em down!**
1. Australia
 2. Sri Lanka
 3. Canada
 4. United Kingdom
 5. South Africa.
- One plus three puzzle**
1. Piano keys
 2. Postage stamp
 3. Matchstick
 4. Wrongly
- Riddles**
3. Pink (ink)
 4. Dart (art)
 5. Lend (end)
 6. Pill (ill).

Answers :

The story 'Mystery on the Mountain' (November 2004) was written by Rosalina Das, Mayurbhanj.



The story 'Champan's Storyland' (November 2004) was an entry from Snigdha Patel, Navi Mumbai.

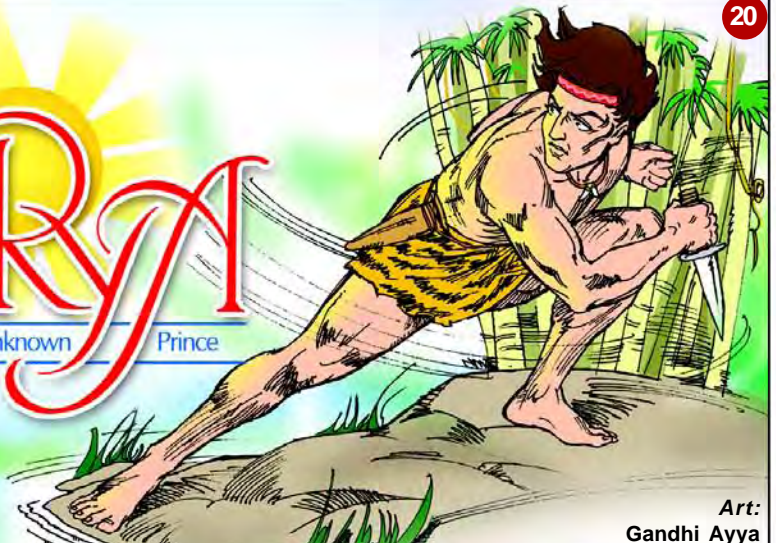
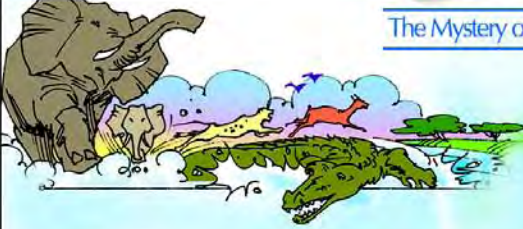
— Editor



General Vir Singh, who has usurped the Shantipur throne, finds all his efforts to establish himself being thwarted. He comes to know of a golden idol unearthed in Jainagar. He wants it so that he can sell the gold and buy arms for his army. The idol is with Sukhdev, the chieftain of Jainagar. He refuses to part with it. The idol will be installed in due course. His palace is surrounded.

ARYA

The Mystery of the Unknown Prince

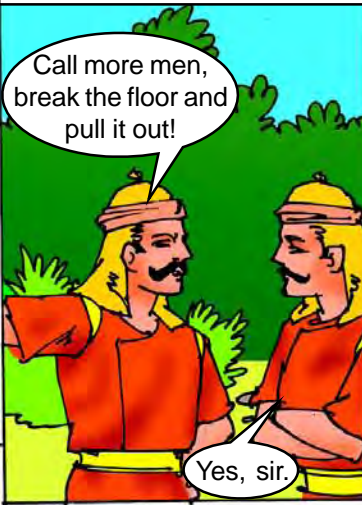


Art:
Gandhi Ayya

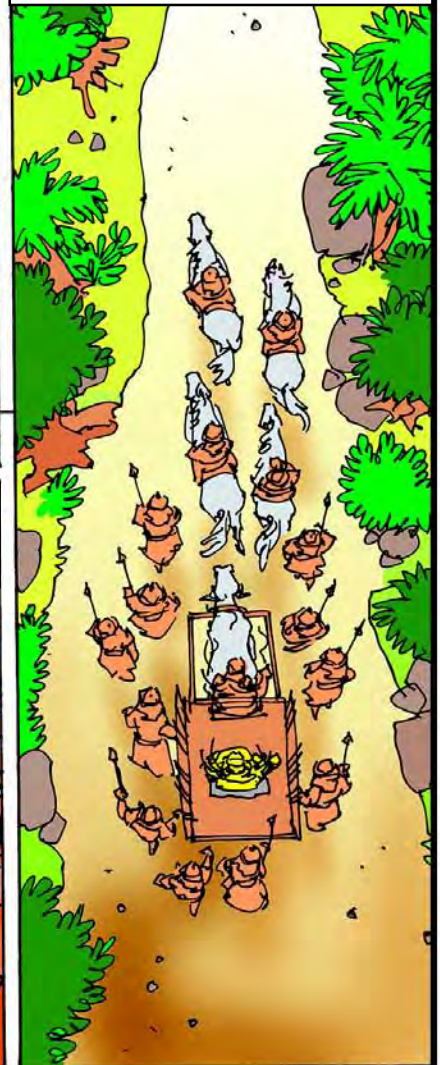
The captain comes out



Sukhdev does not respond to the insinuation.



General Jabar Singh and the captains on horseback escort the idol being taken in a cart.

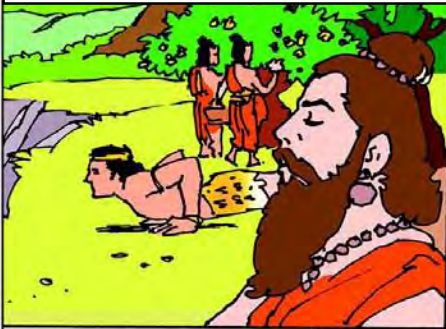


Sounds of breaking the floor are heard. Some time later...

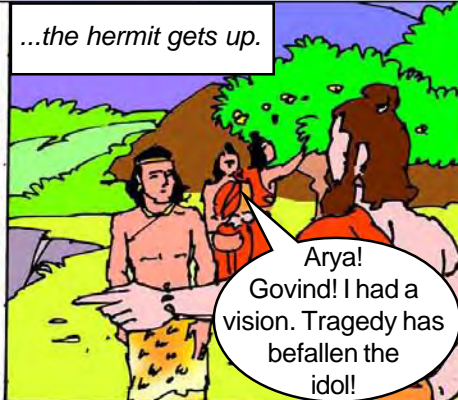


...as the idol is brought out...

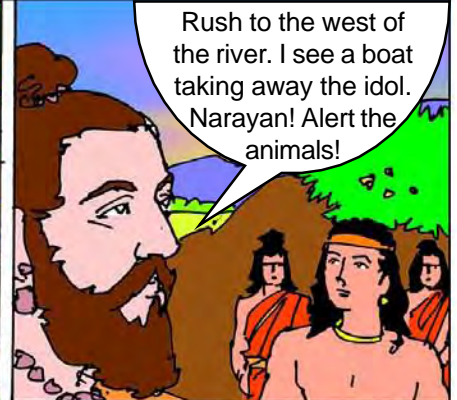
At the hermitage, Jayanand is in deep meditation. Suddenly...



...the hermit gets up.



Rush to the west of the river. I see a boat taking away the idol. Narayan! Alert the animals!

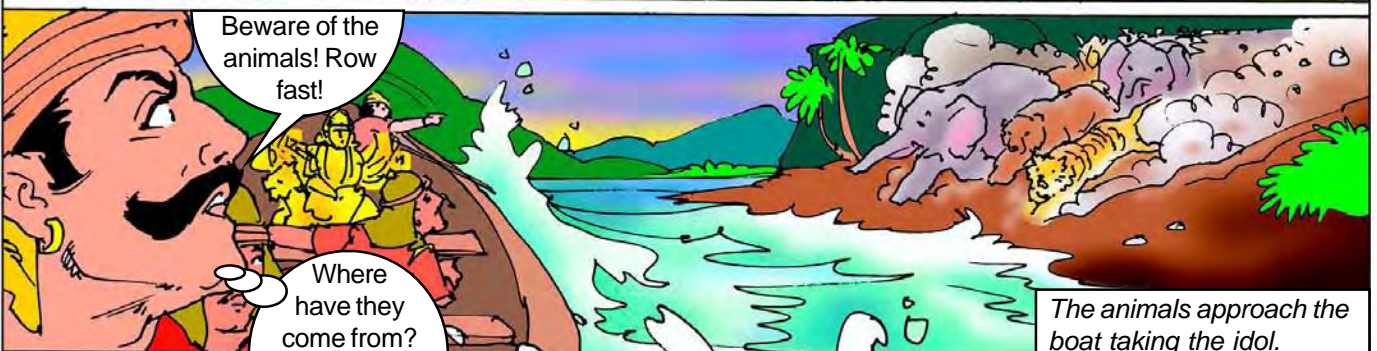


After the soldiers place the idol in the boat, it begins moving. The General and captains follow the boat on the river bank.



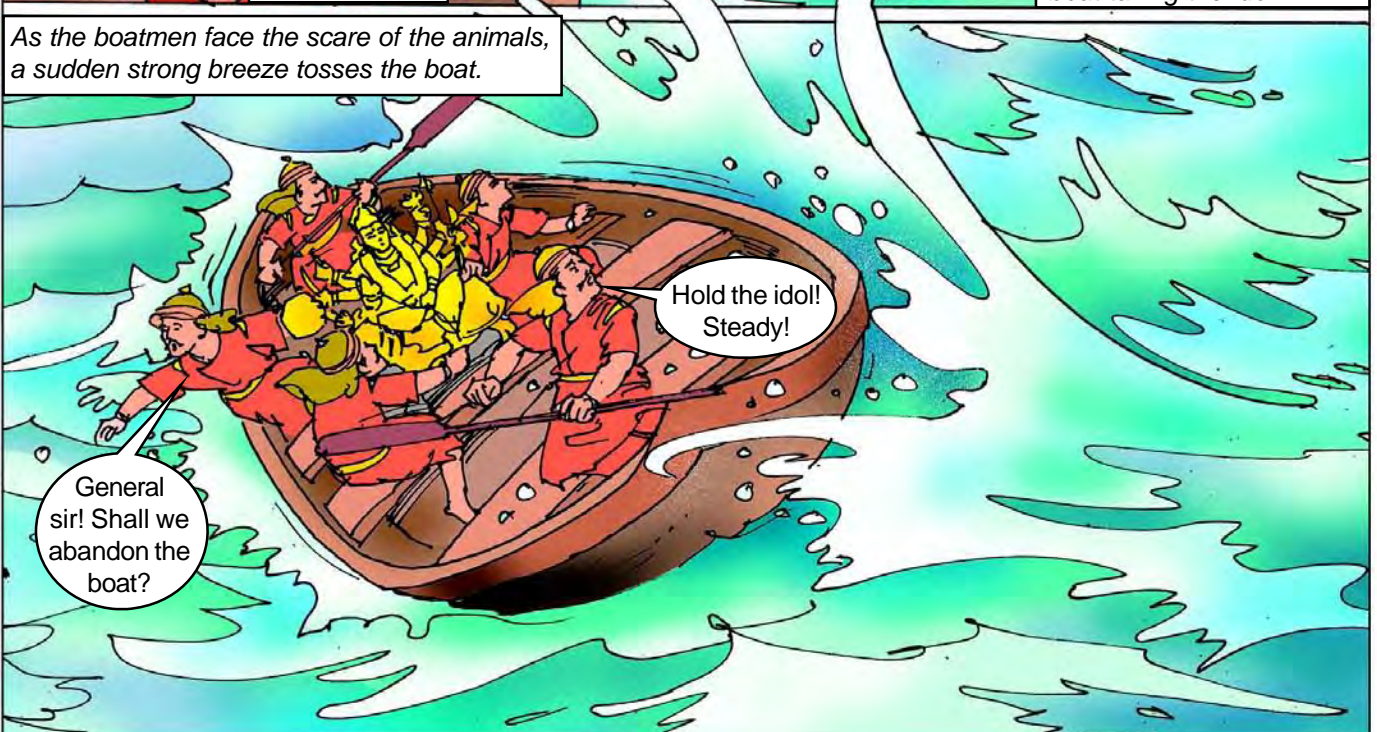
Beware of the animals! Row fast!

Where have they come from?



The animals approach the boat taking the idol.

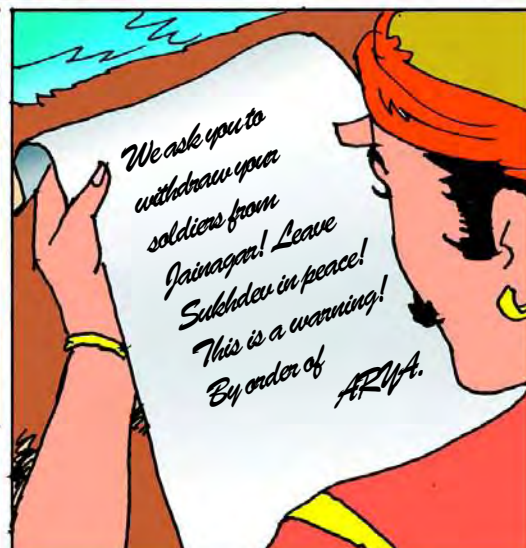
As the boatmen face the scare of the animals, a sudden strong breeze tosses the boat.



The strong wind causes waves in the river which toss the boat violently. As the river narrows, a youth swings from a long branch of a banyan tree, catches hold of the golden idol with his powerful hand and swings back.



While Jabar Singh and a captain look out for the missing soldiers...

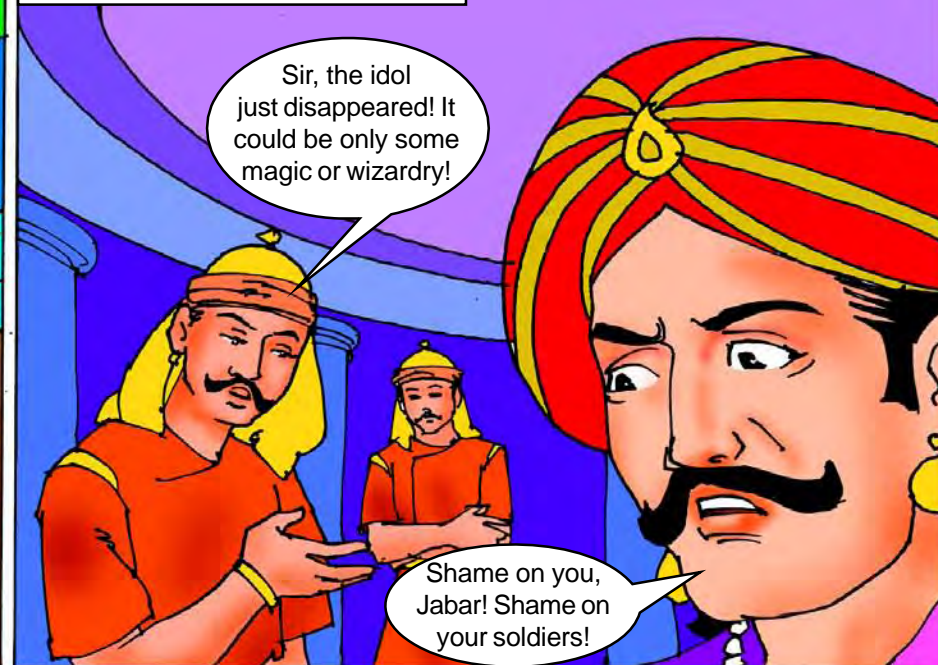




Arya? Never heard of such a name!

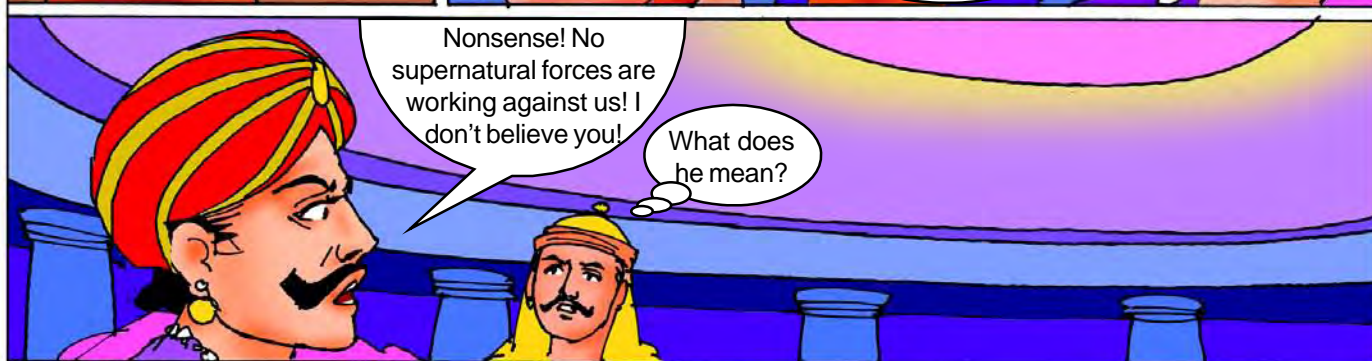
Let's go away before another arrow falls on us!

Vir Singh is not happy with what he has heard from his General.



Sir, the idol just disappeared! It could be only some magic or wizardry!

Shame on you, Jabar! Shame on your soldiers!



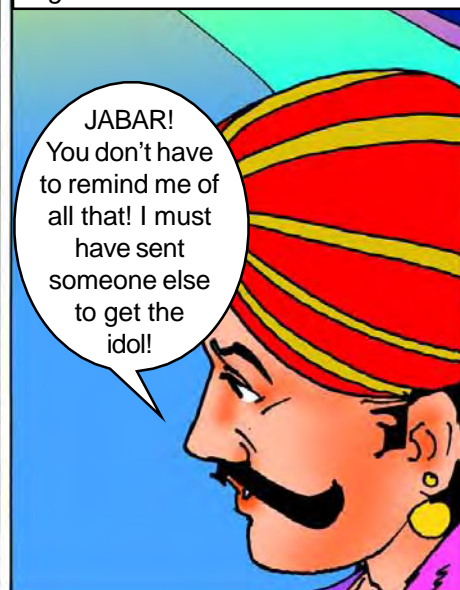
Nonsense! No supernatural forces are working against us! I don't believe you!

What does he mean?



Sir, remember what happened in the forest!

Vir Singh is unable to control his anger.



JABAR! You don't have to remind me of all that! I must have sent someone else to get the idol!

Jabar is stung by the remark.



Wherever the idol is, we must recover it at any cost!

Yes, sir!

Contd.

- ★ **On some trees, one can see leaves all through the year; the leaves on some fall off midway. Why?**

-Mohan Barve, Nashik

The trees on which leaves remain are called evergreen. Each leaf has only a limited life, depending on the type of tree and climate. In a moderate climate, trees lose their leaves during autumn and winter. New leaves take their place during spring. Such trees are called deciduous. Leaves generally fall off when there is less sunlight and a lower temperature. The natural activity called photosynthesis either does not take place or slows down, because it requires sunlight.



- ★ **There is a ban on sports persons taking drugs. Why?**

- Ibrahim Suleiman, Hyderabad

There are **two** reasons. The first and foremost is, certain drugs (they are not considered medicines for any illness) stimulate the muscles and help people to perform better, especially in sports activities. Why do mothers give you a healthy beverage before you go to school? It will make you alert, listen to your teacher, and concentrate on the exercises given by him or her. Similarly, when sportsmen and women generally consume stimulants and take them before they enter the field for a performance, they enjoy a greater advantage than those who do not use drugs. Hence it is considered an unfair practice. Another reason: Drugs eventually will affect one's health. That is why use of drugs is made illegal and users of drugs, if detected, are banned from taking part in contests for either a temporary period, or permanently.



→ **What is the connection between 'mail' and 'blackmail'?**

-Subrato Chatterjee, Kolkata



When people, young or old, men or women, are kidnapped, the kidnappers invariably demand a hefty sum of money. This is called 'ransom'. We often read in newspapers that people like businessmen and movie stars become easy victims of *blackmail*. They are threatened with exposure of personal details which they fear might go against their character or family relations affecting their profession, business or future. And they try to appease the extortionists by meeting their demand. This is called blackmail, where the word 'mail' has no relationship with Post or conveyance of communication, though the threat may be delivered in writing or made over the telephone. The 'mail' in blackmail is actually a Scottish expression meaning tax, which was once paid in the form of black cattle. When the tax was paid in silver coins, it was known as *whitemail*.

- **Recently, the word 'euthanesia' was frequently used in reports about someone who was critically ill. What does it actually mean?**

-Lalitha Sundaram, Madurai

The person was aware that he would not recover. He did not wish to prolong his suffering. He, therefore, expressed a desire that his end be expedited. In short, he wanted an early end to his life. In other words, he pleaded for mercy-killing which, in medical terms, is known as euthanesia.



Thus the Sea Became Salty

LEGENDS FROM OTHER LANDS (JAPAN)

Long long ago, in a village close to a forest lived two friends, Suzu and Yamar. Suzu was strong and smart. Yamar was not exactly weak, but was lazy. If they found some ripe fruit on the branches of a tall tree, it was for Suzu to climb and pluck them. But he would let Yamar choose from them first.

They grew up. Both got married. Suzu lived in a small house and earned his living through hard work, whereas Yamar lived comfortably because his father had left him a few acres of land.

But Suzu and Yamar continued to be friends. It was a habit with them to go into the forest whenever both had leisure. One day they entered a cave. Suzu's attention went over to some small stones which appeared to shine in the darkness. He picked them up. When both came out of the cave, he showed them to Yamar. Yamar examined them. His eyes flashed with excitement, but he said casually, "I am to visit the town tomorrow. I shall find out if they have any value."

Yamar went to the town the next day. His guess was right. They were precious stones. He sold them and returned home with wealth enough to be counted among the rich. To Suzu he gave

a few coins and said, "Well, they were practically worthless. However, a wealthy man bought them for decorating his flower-vase. Here is half of what I got."

Yamar built a mansion and bought horses and employed a number of servants. "I chanced upon some buried wealth in my ancestral house," he told his neighbours.

Suzu was glad that his friend had prospered. "In times of need I can seek his help, after all!" he told his wife. His wife was not so sure. She even suspected that the stones Suzu had found were the source of Yamar's prosperity.

One day Suzu headed towards the cave alone. He needed some money badly to buy some medicine for his little son. On reaching the site, he found Yamar entering the cave. "What are you doing here?" asked Suzu.

Taken aback, Yamar mumbled out that he was just passing by and entered the cave with no specific intention. "But what brings you here?" asked Yamar in turn. "Well, I came here to see if some stones are there," answered Suzu truthfully. "Very good. Let's search together. If we find more,



once again I can carry them to the town. You're too innocent to extract a good price for them," said Yamar. They looked everywhere under rocks, but to no avail. They came out of the cave and walked homeward. "It may rain. Let's hurry," said Yamar and he walked faster than Suzu.

"My son, would you kindly lift this stack of dry wood and place it on my head?" said an old woman who sat under a tree, looking appealingly at Yamar.

Yamar hurried away, after casting a contemptuous look.

"Granny! Let me carry the stack for you," said Suzu as he lifted the burden and placed it on his own head. He followed the woman to her hut and kept the stack down at her door.

"My son, it was so sweet of you to help me," said the old woman. She then brought out a piece of cake and gave it to him. "You look hungry. Eat this cake. It will not only satisfy your hunger but cure you of diseases if you have any."

Suzu was happy. Though it was not a big piece, he decided to give it to his ailing son.

He had hardly taken only a few steps when someone called out to him in a piteous tone: "O passer-by, I'm dying of hunger. Can you give me something to eat?" asked a stranger lying on a slab of stone. Alas, he gave the impression that he was gasping for the last few breaths of his life. Suzu lost no time in offering him the cake he had. The dying man ate it with relish and sat up.

"Good man, here's a small gift for you. Did I say small? Indeed, small in appearance but great in performance," said the stranger. He then handed to Suzu a small wheel made of bamboo sticks. It had a handle. "Ask for anything you really need and turn the wheel towards right. As soon as your demand has been fulfilled, turn it to your left so that it stops giving you more. Do not depend on it forever. You must work honestly. When you have got everything to lead a reasonably carefree life, you throw it into the sea."

Suzu thanked the man and accepted the wheel and resumed walking.

It was too much to believe that a mere bamboo wheel could grant him anything he needed. He needed some money for his son's medicine. No doubt, his friend Yamar would come to his aid.

It had started raining when he reached Yamar's house.

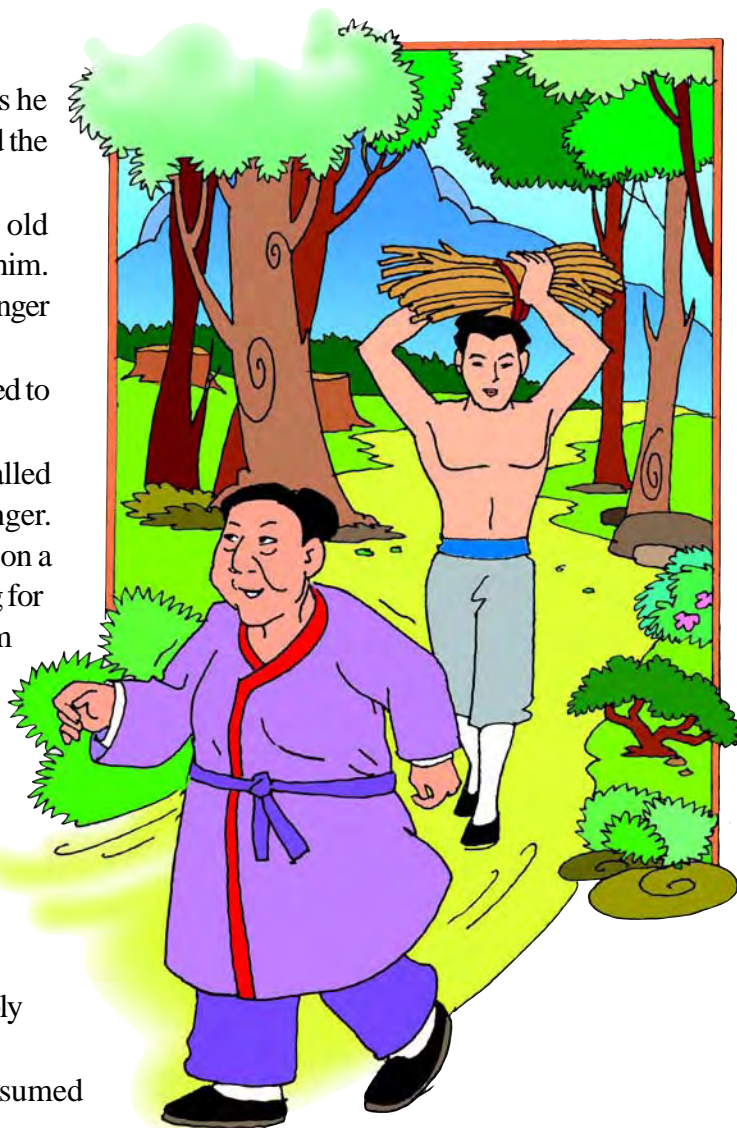
"My friend, I need some money badly. My son is ill and ..."

"Suzu, please come in and have some food. But now that I have numerous friends, I cannot go on helping every friend's ailing sons!" said Yamar.

"But I promise to pay back what you lend me!"

"Must I repeat what I said?" asked Yamar.

"Thanks, you need not," said Suzu. He sighed and went home.



“What have you brought, Father?” asked his ailing son, looking at the bamboo wheel in his father’s hand.

“Ha ha!” Suzu laughed with some anguish and said, “Well this is expected to give us some food!” he said light-heartedly and turned the wheel to the right.

Lo and behold, there were several items of food ready to be eaten. Suzu turned the wheel to the left. Suzu, his wife and son – all remained speechless. Suzu then asked the wheel for the medicine that must cure his son. It was there. The little boy took it and felt fine. By then a heavy downpour had begun. Suzu’s roof was leaking. “Let us have a reasonably good house.” His wish was fulfilled.

The whole village saw with amazement that Suzu had come to own the most elegant house in the region. Yamar goggled his eyes and surveyed it, his mouth agape. “How was it possible?” he asked his friend. “With God’s Grace,” replied Suzu.

By and by Suzu obtained from the magic wheel whatever he needed to live comfortably.

Yamar lost the peace of his mind and even his sleep. Night after night he would loiter around Suzu’s house and peep through the window to find out the secret of his prosperity.

One night he saw Suzu turning the wheel to the right after asking it for a stone image of the deity he worshipped. Once the idol was there, he told his wife, “It is time I must throw the wheel into the sea. We have enough. We must not forget how to labour and earn our living.”

“I agree,” said Suzu’s wife.

Yamar now knew the secret. He observed where Suzu kept the wheel. At midnight he managed to steal it away. He brought a boat the next day and sailed towards a small island not very far from the mainland. He wished to create a palace and fit it with every conceivable luxury. Then he would shift his family there, so that Suzu could not suspect him of stealing the magic wheel.

He had carried some food with him. After an hour’s sailing, he felt hungry and began to eat the food. The cook had forgotten to put salt in the items. He smiled. He turned the wheel right asking it for salt. Instantly there was a heap of salt in front of him. But the wheel went on producing more and more salt. Soon he was scared of the load on the boat. But he did not know how to stop the heap from growing. As he looked on with panic, the boat began sinking. Two boatmen swam towards Yamar’s passing boat. But Yamar did not know how to swim. He went down into the sea along with the boat.

But the wheel went on producing more and more salt. The whole sea became salty. Even today the wheel is giving out salt so that no amount of rain falling on the sea can make it any less salty! That explains!

-By MD



PUZZLE DAZZLE



PUZZLING BIRDS

A	S	D	G	O	O	S	E	R
M	U	C	F	E	G	T	M	L
C	A	R	D	I	N	A	L	N
R	V	A	L	I	C	R	O	W
O	G	N	I	M	A	L	F	D
W	J	E	V	E	D	I	B	O
L	R	C	S	W	A	N	Q	V
P	L	N	T	E	L	G	A	E
K	C	U	D	O	H	D	Y	R

In the grid given below the names of a few birds are hidden; they are also hidden in each of the sentences below.

The letters of the name may be separated

by spaces. Can you find them all? And try to identify them in the grid, too.



Clues:

1. The crane lifted the car and dropped it into the crusher.
2. My pillow is stuffed with goose feathers.
3. I was walking by the building when someone yelled "Duck!"
4. John and Jack went bowling last night.
5. "Do you see that star lingering on the horizon?" asked Tom.
6. As Sally watched, the beagle tripped over its own ear as it romped in the backyard.
7. The flamingo had smoke billowing out of it.
8. "I only need one card in all the deck to go out," Jake said.
9. "How will we find her in this crowd of people?" Cindy asked.
10. Chris wanted to ride the carousel in the park.

- By R Vaasugi

Chocolates count

The teacher in the Abracadabra School gave a few chocolates to the four kids and asked them to count it. The kids counted it and they had 18 pieces of chocolates in all.

Rohan had fewer than 4.

Mohan had twice as much as Rohan.

Shalini had twice as much as Mohan.

Malini had 2 pieces more than Rohan.

How many chocolates did each have?



Rohan 2, Mohan 4, Shalini 8, and Malini 4.

Answer :

Answers :

1. Crane, 2. Goose, 3. Duck, 4. Owl, 5. Starling, 6. Eagle or dove, 7. Flamingo, 8. Cardinal, 9. Crow, 10. Swan.



IN QUEST OF THE LOST CITY OF 'Z'

Colonel Percy Harrison Fawcett was a fearless, young Officer in the British army. He was just about 40 years old when, in 1906, the Royal Geographical Society approached him with a surprising proposal. He was to lead an expedition to mark clear-cut borders between Bolivia and Brazil in South America. The lack of well defined borders had often led to tension and disputes in the region.

While he was in the army, Colonel Fawcett had served with distinction in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Malta, Hong Kong and the First World War. He also did some secret service work in North Africa. Often finding his military work rather boring, he would spend his time in learning the art of surveying, hoping to find some more interesting opening in future. Now when this offer came to him, he jumped at it. He was cautiously told that it would be a taxing and dangerous project with great risks to his own life. But that did not in the least discourage him.

So, without further delay, the Colonel proceeded from England to South America. He was thrilled to find the continent a mixture of grandeur, romance and horror. He soon realised that just to reach the region where he was supposed to start his work was in itself a great ordeal. They had to journey on sure-footed mules on precipitous paths in the mountains, at a height of about 17,000 ft. Suddenly the baggage on the mule's back would get caught on a jutting rock, the impact of which would send the poor beast frantically screaming over the edge of the precipice. The animals with their loads struggled up 30 ft



at a time. Then they would stop gasping for breath in the thin air.

The party halted in a village. They found how difficult life really was in the interior regions of the continent. Disease was rampant and incredibly 50 per cent of the population died every year. Totally cut off from the world outside, the inhabitants were often depressed and drank something intoxicating to make them forget the burden of existence. They also chewed a certain cane which, after some time, made them practically immune to pain and several deadly forest diseases.

Once, while paddling down a turbulent river, Fawcett and his men straight away ran into a native camp on a sandy shore. At once the dogs barked, men shouted, women screamed and picked up their children. Suddenly arrows whizzed past the visitors as they were hauling their canoes on to the bank. The Colonel gestured with some native words that he knew, trying to convey that they were friends. But the message did not seem to get through to them. For the onslaught of arrows continued with full force. Then the Colonel had an idea. He asked one of his men to play on his accordion and sing. The man sang many popular songs. Everyone in the group noticed that the lyrics had abruptly changed to "They've stopped shooting at us". Indeed the singer was right. The arrows had stopped coming and Fawcett and his men approached the natives and greeted them. Gifts were then exchanged as a sign of friendship.

One night while the party camped on a river-bank, Fawcett felt something scuttling up his arm and over his neck, something "hairy and revolting". It was a gigantic spider, as large as a dinner plate. It fiercely clung to his hand. Finally he managed to shake it off. It dropped to the ground and luckily moved away in peace. Its bite is supposed to be poisonous and sometimes even fatal.

At sundown when the skies darkened, there appeared the vampire bats. The bats were dangerous, for they often gnawed through the mosquito nets and

attacked their sleeping prey. There were several fearsome creatures in and around the great Amazon River. The most frightening among them were the giant Anacondas, their length varying from 60 to 80 ft. They were dangerous with their stinking breath and fatal bite. The seven-foot long Bushmasters were aggressive and deadly poisonous snakes. They struck like lightning and their bite usually meant death. There were then the electric eels whose contacts were like shock that could paralyse and drown a man. The flesh-eating piranha fish attacked in shoals and could strip a whole carcass to mere bones within seconds.

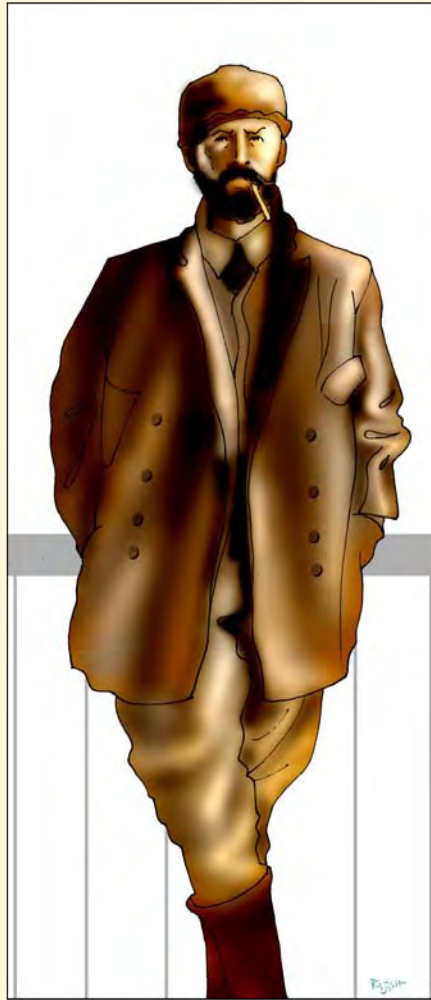
Thus for three years Colonel Fawcett worked for the Boundary Commission charting and mapping the territory. When the assignment came to an end, he took voluntary retirement from military service and continued to explore the unknown jungles of South America which fascinated him. Gradually he became more and more interested in the archaeology of the region. He had already made seven expeditions between 1906 and 1924.

"Of all the countries on the face of the Earth, none is more mysterious, or less explored, than Brazil. Miles upon miles of this country have never been set foot upon by white man. In these areas live savage tribes whose civilizations are said to be akin to those of the Stone Age. Many of those who have dared venturing into these pockets of unexplored jungle have never come out."



Now Colonel Fawcett wanted to penetrate this mysterious and ancient wilderness. For he firmly believed that in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso, meaning “great woods”, there existed once upon a time a splendid civilisation. He dreamed of discovering the ruins of this very ancient lost city which he called “Z”. So, in 1925 the daring adventurer, his elder son, Jack Fawcett, and a friend, Raleigh Rimell, launched an expedition in search of the fabled lost city of Z where it was said the houses had “stars to light them, which never went out”.

The old natives told the Colonel that they had indeed seen such mysterious “cold lights” in the lost cities deep in the jungles. He wrote in his journal during the course of his journey: “In the forests were various beasts still unfamiliar to zoologists, such as the milta, which I have seen twice, a black doglike cat about the size of a foxhound. There were snakes and insects yet unknown to scientists; and in the forests of the Madidi, some mysterious and enormous beast has frequently been disturbed in the swamps – possibly a primeval monster like those reported in other parts of the continent. Certainly tracks have been found belonging to no known animal – huge tracks, far greater than could



have been made by any species we know.”

On May 20, 1925, Colonel Fawcett wrote a letter in which he said that he hoped to reach his main objective by August. “Thereafter our fate is in the lap of gods,” he concluded. Then nine days later he reached the Dead Horse Camp. This was the location of one of his earlier expeditions which he was compelled to abandon because his horse suddenly died there, hence the name. This was in fact the very last outpost of civilisation. From there on, only unexplored and dangerous territory awaited them. They sent back the assistants who had helped them up to this point. Now they would have to continue their quest on their own.

From here Colonel Fawcett wrote a letter to his wife in which he said, “You need have no fear of failure...”

These were unfortunately his last words and it was the last anyone ever heard of the expedition. For, the three brave men disappeared into the jungle never to be seen again. Several expeditions to trace them met with no success. What really happened to one of the most daring adventurers of all times? It has remained a mystery.

- By AKD



Stephen La Berge is the first scientist to empirically prove the existence of the phenomena of lucid dreaming. He claims, the notion that the dream state is one of unconsciousness is patently false. “Your waking consciousness is always present in your dreams,” he says. “If it were not, you would not be able to remember dreams, because you only remember an event you have consciously experienced.”

DID YOU KNOW

The Eskimo, a word applied to Arctic peoples by Europeans and others since the 16th century, originated in Montagnais, an Algonquian language. Once erroneously thought to mean “eaters of raw flesh”, the name, though still somewhat obscure, is now believed to refer to snowshoes.



TINKLES FOR SMELL



It was a rather hot day. Mulla Nasruddin didn't have any work to do. He had no company, either. His wife had gone to her parents. Rather, she had gone off in a tiff, after he pointed out that the full-boiled egg she served him at lunch had no salt added to it. "Nothing is more tasteless than an egg without salt," he raised his voice.

"To err is human; to forgive is divine," she spat back.

"Proverbs can't salt the egg, you stupid; nor can smell of food satisfy one's hunger," he bristled with rage. One word led to another till she hurriedly bundled up a few clothes and stomped out, saying she would never return.



Not till he learnt to eat whatever she served him, be its taste bland or its smell unpalatable.

That was too much to ask of any man, he mumbled to himself, while he sat on a *mooda* and let his mind replay the scene that had led to his wife's departure.

Then he heard the knock. Someone was at the door. That cheered him. He could do with company. So he rose quickly, walked to the door, pulled the bolt aside and held the door open.

"*Salaam alai kum*, my Malik," the caller, an old man in rags, bent double over with age, squeaked.

"You!" Nasruddin sounded like a balloon that had been pricked, suddenly.

"Mulla Nasruddin, it is me," said the caller Fakruddin. He had nothing to call his own. No home, no wife, no kith nor kin, no strength to work and earn. He begged for a living.

"What do you want, Fakru? My wife is not here. So I can't offer you any food," Nasruddin showed his helplessness.

"I am in deep trouble, Mulla. I will end up in prison unless you save me," the man came down on his heels, held Nasruddin's feet and cried his heart out.

"What did you do? Kill a man? Loot a shop? Steal a rich man's purse?" Nasruddin asked.

"How could you be so unkind, Mulla! You know me for years. I'm an honest beggar. I have nothing to call my own. I spend the nights in the poor home. During the day, I beg in the bazaar. Allah be praised! There are still kind men who give me alms. May their tribe increase!" Fakru wailed.

"Why then should you be sent to jail?" Nasruddin decided to go deep into the mystery.

The beggar rolled out the story.

As usual, he said, he took his place on the pavement,



spread out an old piece of cloth in front of him and held his palm out, saying, "Give to the poor old man. God shall give you tenfold."

By noon, he had collected four Shekels. The heat was oppressive. So he decided to rest for some time. He dragged his weary frame and lay down on the verandah of a shop whose shutters were down. Next to the shop was a food outlet. A cook was roasting goat's meat over a slow fire. The smell of the cooked meat filled the air. It spread out and reached the beggar, too. He sniffed the air, happily. He closed his eyes and imagined the pleasures of tasting the goat's meat. "Wah, wah, that is the finest dish I ever had in my life!" he said, loudly, rolling his tongue over his lips happily.

Those words reached the ears of Peerzada, the owner of the outlet. Peerzada looked all around and heard Fakruddin repeating the words. "What delicious food! The finest I ever had!" the beggar kept repeating, his eyes closed. Then he felt a hand hauling him up firmly. He quickly opened his eyes and saw the fat and stout Peerzada holding him by the scruff of his neck and giving him angry looks. "You beggar! You will pay for enjoying the goat's meat."

"But I never got anywhere near it," the beggar croaked.

"Didn't you take in the smell?"

"I did."

"Didn't you say that you never had tasted such delicious food ever?"

"Did I say that?" the beggar could not remember.

"You did. I have witnesses here," Peerzada turned to a couple of clients who were enjoying the dish. They, too, had heard the beggar sing in praise of the food. They nodded their heads.

"But I never got anywhere near the goat's meat, I swear!" the poor beggar shivered in fright.

"You enjoyed the smell for more than half an hour," Peerzada said.

"Maybe, I did," the beggar nodded his head.

"So pay the price for the smell. Pay two Shekels," Peerzada insisted.

"Whoever has heard of paying a price for taking in the smell that comes with the wind!" the beggar refused to pay.

"I will fix you, you beggar! I shall complain to the Caliph. And the Caliph shall send you to jail."

"For what?"

"For not paying for the smell," Peerzada seemed sure of himself. He told his son to attend the counter and walked off toward the palace of the Caliph.

The beggar didn't know what to do. Then he remembered Mulla Nasruddin. He rushed to the Mulla to seek help.

Nasruddin heard the story and felt sorry for the beggar. He held Fakruddin by the arm and assured him that no harm would come to him. Those words cheered the poor beggar.

But his face fell when he heard the shuffle of feet, turned and noticed two palace guards running in, taking his name. The beggar sighed, deeply.

"You are under arrest," one of the guards caught him by the arm.

"Come with us. The Caliph wants you to answer the charge that you refused to pay Peerzada the price of the smell of goat's meat that you enjoyed," the second guard held him tighter.

The beggar's face fell. His eyes had the looks of a hunted animal.

"Save me, Mulla!" he begged, while the guards dragged him away.

"I shall take just a minute. I need to be better dressed. Otherwise the sentries won't let me in. I shall join you at the royal court. I will be there by the time the guards produce you before the Caliph. Don't worry. You won't go to jail," Nasruddin assured him,

The guards led the beggar away.

Nasruddin quickly got into a dress more suited for appearance at the royal court. He threw a cloak over his shoulder, locked the door of the house, moved to the stake to which his donkey had been tied, removed the knots of the rope, mounted the donkey and nudged it toward the royal palace.

He reached the palace gates just in time. He found the guards leading the beggar to the Caliph's presence. He tied the donkey to a stake, checked that his clothes were not ruffled and walked up to the gate. The sentries knew him, bowed and let him in. He made it to the court hall. He bowed to the Caliph, coming down on all four and kissing the floor.

The Caliph bade him take his seat. He did so.

The beggar stood shivering with fright. The Caliph asked Peerzada to present his case. He recited his complaint. Fakruddin had taken in the smell of a fine goat meat for over half an hour.

He loudly repeated that he had never tasted such delicious food ever. "There are witnesses to that, O Great One," Peerzada claimed.

"What is it that you want?" the Caliph asked.

"Two Shekels, for the smell of fine goat's meat for half an hour," Peerzada set down his demand.

The Caliph turned to one of his advisers.

"He should pay the price. For he did enjoy the smell didn't he?" the courtier replied.

"Can I say something, O Noble Sire?" Nasruddin stood up. The Caliph gave him the nod.

"It is true, My Lord, that Fakruddin smelt the goat meat for half an hour. And Peerzada is justified in asking for compensation," Nasruddin's words gave the beggar a shock. He howled like a trapped animal.

"Sh . . . Not a sound. Or . . ." the guard who held him gave him a stern stare and silenced him.

"You said it, Nasruddin," Peerzada commended him.

"O Noble Sire, Peerzada demands two Shekels for the smell. I feel it is too high a price," Nasruddin paused.

"What is the right compensation, Mulla Nasruddin," the Caliph asked.

"My Lord! Fakruddin didn't eat the goat's meat. He only smelt it."

"I know."

"So Peerzada can't claim the Shekels. He is only entitled to hear the sound of the coins," Nasruddin pulled out a dozen Shekels from the folds of his dress and dropped them on the floor. The tinkle of the coins filled the hall for a few seconds.

"If he likes, he can listen to the tinkle of coins for half an hour. I shall collect the coins and drop them again and again till he feels he has received his dues," Nasruddin turned to find a smile on Fakruddin's lips. He also noticed Peerzada making a quick bow and rushing out of the royal court, behaving as if his back was on fire.

- By R.K.Murthi





When choosing between two evils,
I always like to try the one I've
never tried before.

- Mae West



At an evening party the guests
were asked to take part in a
game in which everybody
was to make a face,
the one who made
the worst face to
win the prize. It
seemed as if all did their
worst. Then the judge went up
to one woman who was sitting off
in a corner.

Judge : Madam, I think you've won the prize.
Allow me to.....

Woman : Sir, excuse me - I wasn't playing.

LAUGH TILL YOU DROP!

Two young boys were spending the
night at their grandparents. At
bedtime, the two boys knelt
beside their beds to say their
prayers when the youngest
one began praying at the top
of his lungs. "I PRAY FOR A
BICYCLE...I PRAY FOR A NEW VIDEO
GAME...I PRAY FOR A NEW VCR..."



His elder brother leaned over and nudged the
younger brother and said, "Why are you shouting
your prayers? God isn't deaf."

To which the little brother replied, "No, but
Grandma is!"



Teacher : What do you
get if you add 4,657 and
7,854, then subtract 678
and divide the answer by
62?

Rinku : A headache!

Dushtu Dattu



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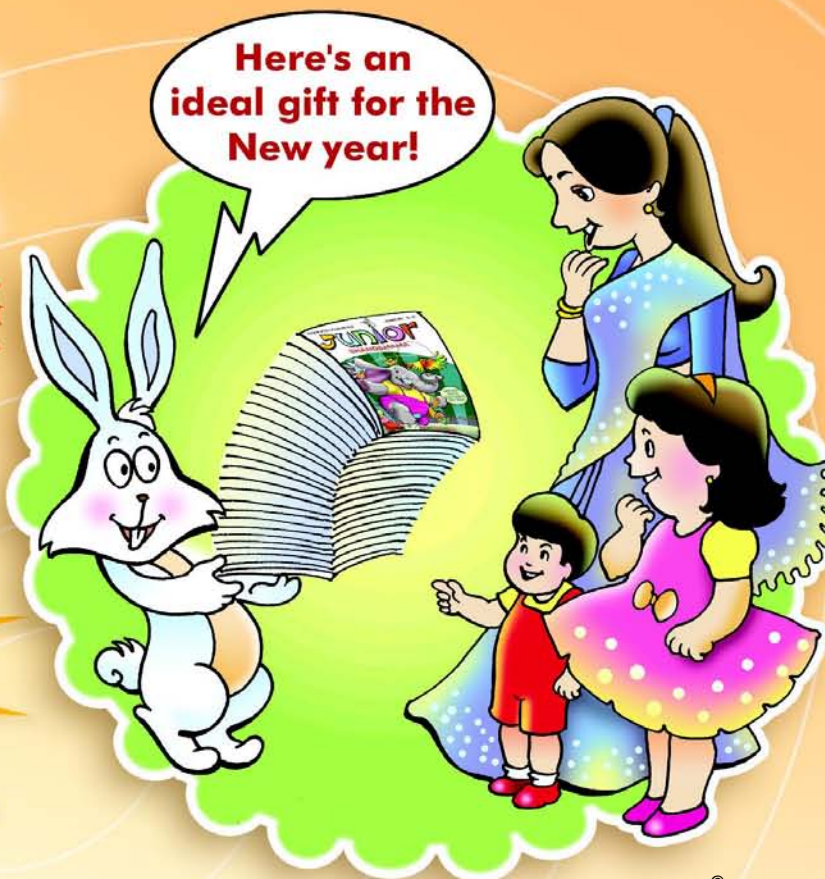
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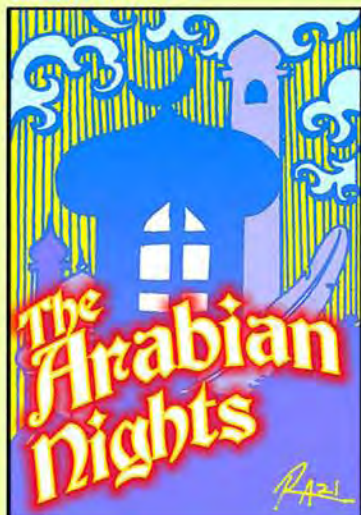
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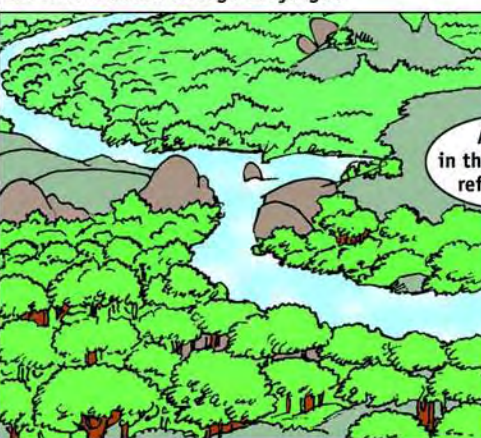
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A large number of birds lived in a small jungle. They ate the sweet fruits on the trees and drank from the river that ran through the jungle.



A bath in this water is refreshing.



The water is cool.

Come on, We've to meet our king.

Their king was the crow. He had summoned the birds to tell them something important.



Has everybody assembled?



Does he want to warn us about any hunter?

I think it's something else.

Or is any storm approaching?

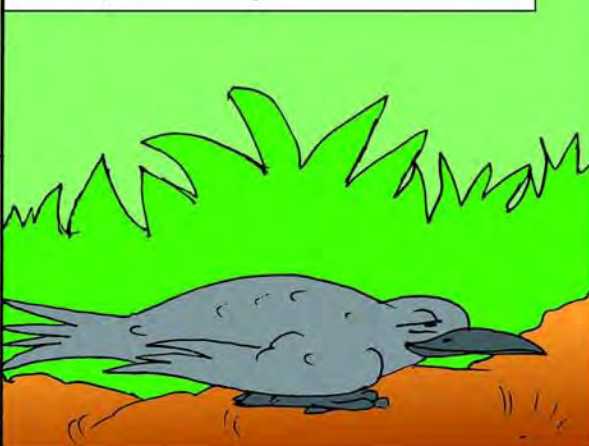


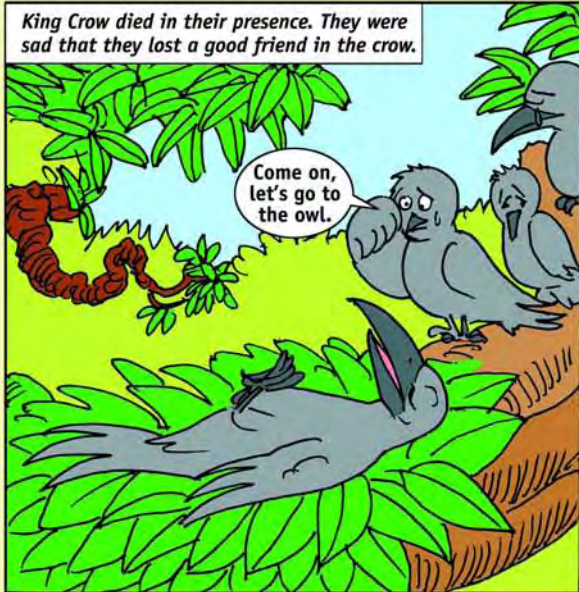
Yes, he's a good choice.

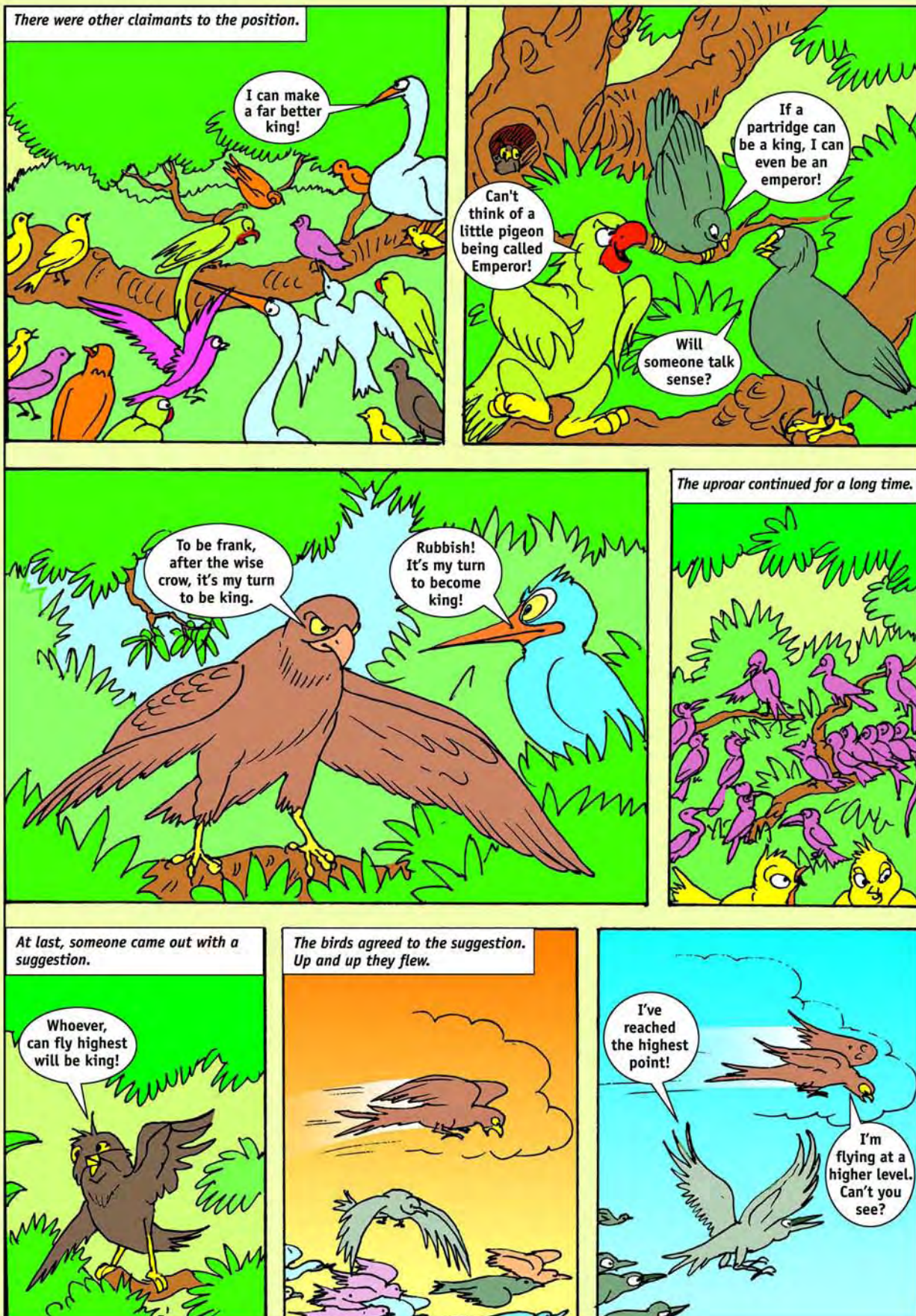
Listen! I've been king for long. When I'm gone, you must make the old owl your king.

Don't trust any stranger.

Soon thereafter King Crow fell ill. He knew his end was near. His feeble cries brought the birds to his side.



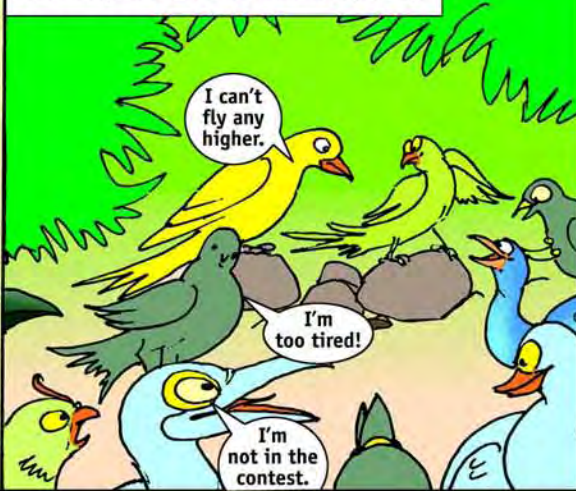




The birds flew together vying with each other. Some soared up to the clouds.



Soon, many birds were tired and they gave up.



A hawk flying high saw them disarrayed and decided to take advantage.



But the hawk's thoughts were somewhere else. He pounced on the birds and began killing them.



Many birds flew away in fear.



The hawk was surprised.



The birds went back to the owl, who now accepted their request.



END

THE PANAMA CANAL



The reality of today is often the end result of dreams of the past.

Look at the Panama Canal. People of the USA had dreamed of it for long. But, then, there was logic behind their dream. Till the Canal was built, the ship route linking New York and California lay around the tip of South America. The route was long, also

hazardous. Could a shorter route be found? Some daring thinkers studied the topography of the two continents. "How about a man-made canal across the Isthmus of Central America!" they suggested.

Most people dismissed the proposal as a Utopian dream. But the dreamers would not give up. Their hopes surged when Ferdinand de Lesseps, the well-known French engineer, successfully completed the Suez Canal in 1869. The Canal connecting the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea, cut down substantially the distance of the shipping route between Europe and Asia. So, a request was made to de Lesseps to undertake the construction of a canal across the Isthmus of South America. He located three possible sites for digging the canal. The two most favoured routes lay across Panama and across Nicaragua. A route across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Mexico was a third option. The French engineer decided to build the Panama Canal.

Work began on January 1, 1880. Construction at Panama involved clearing extensive forests around vast rocky terrain. The work, therefore, did not proceed as per schedule. That was bad enough. Mosquitoes added to his misery. Malaria and Yellow Fever laid down the workers. Twenty thousand workers died. That gave the French a real scare. The company that financed the project ran into heavy losses. They decided, after much heart searching, to give up the grand plan.

The project stayed in limbo for long. In 1899, Senator J.T. Morgan introduced a bill in the US Congress seeking funds for building the Nicaraguan Canal. President McKinley probably would have signed a bill authorizing funds for the project, but he fell to an assassin's bullet on September 6, 1901.

Around this time, William Cromwell and Philippe Bunau-varilla, two financiers who had substantial stakes in promoting the Canal at Panama, bought space in newspapers and magazines to project Panama as the more advantageous site. They issued pamphlets, went round addressing large audiences, and distributed pamphlets advocating the Canal at Panama. They also used their money power to win the support of a few Senators. In 1902, when Senator William Hepburn of Iowa introduced a bill providing for a Nicaraguan canal, Senator John Spooner of Wisconsin proposed an amendment providing for the canal at Panama instead.

Most Senators were still in favour of Nicaragua. It might have received the nod but for a postage stamp that Nicaragua issued around that time. It showed an active volcano, about 30km from the site of the proposed canal. Philippe got hold of a large number of the stamp and had one sent to each Senator on the day of the vote. The Senators wondered why the USA should dump huge sums in a project that might be wiped out by volcanic eruptions. That sealed the fate of the Nicaraguan option. Panama

THIS HAPPENED IN JANUARY

became the chosen site for the canal. The House of Representatives approved the Bill. Theodore Roosevelt, who had succeeded McKinley, as President, approved it.

At that time Panama was part of Colombia. Roosevelt held negotiations with the Colombians to obtain the rights to build the canal. An agreement was signed, but the Colombian Senate failed to ratify the treaty. Roosevelt did not get disheartened. Instead, he encouraged the section of the people of Panama who were struggling for freedom from Colombia to revolt. The rebels declared independence on November 3, 2003. When fighting began, the USA stationed its battleships off the Panama Coast, on the pretext of naval exercises. That scared the Colombians. Panama became a free nation.

Roosevelt now demanded his pound of flesh. The new rulers of Panama readily agreed. On February 23, 1904, they transferred control of the Panama Canal Zone to the USA for \$10 million.

Dr. Wiliam Gorgas was sent to the area to carry out sanitary measures. His efforts paid rich dividends. By 1905, the number of cases of malaria and yellow fever came down substantially. John Findlay was sent as the first chief engineer of the project. But he resigned due to ill health. John Stevens came in his place. He changed the design of the canal. He started work on a lock-and-dam system. An artificial lake, now known as Lake Gatun, was made by damming the river Chagres. Twelve locks, in 3 flights, were designed to take the ships up or down from Lake Gatun.

The lower lock gate is at the level of the canal. The



lower gate is shut and the upper gate is lifted. Water runs into the lock and the ship rises with the water level. When the level of water in the lock is the same as the level upstream, the upper lock gate is opened and the ship moves to a higher level. This process is repeated to lift the ship to negotiate Lake Gatun located 25 m above sea level.

In 1907, Colonel George Washington Goethals assumed charge. On October 10, 1913, President Woodrow Wilson triggered the explosion of the Gamboa Dyke. That marked the completion of the 80 km long Canal. The Canal's cost was estimated at \$ 23 million. The investment was worth it, said one and all. It revolutionized world shipping. Even today it remains a great technological marvel.

- By R.K. Murthi

INDIANS AND WORLD TITLES

CHESS



P.HARIKRISHNA is the current world champion in Junior Chess. In the 22nd World Championship held in Cochin, the 18-year old Guntur youth was crowned champion. He won all the rounds. In 1987, it was India's Viswanathan Anand who had won the same title, which came to India after 17 years.

India witnessed success at the World Youth Chess Championship held in Herakleion, in Greece, when in the under-14 category for girls, former Grandmaster **DRONAVALLI HARIKA** of Andhra Pradesh became the title holder. Having won in seven games and four games ending in draw, Harika won the world championship undefeated. In the championship held in Spain in 2000, India's Koneru Humpy had won the same title.



CRICKET

ANIL KUMBLE equalled Kapil Dev's world record of a haul of 434 Test wickets when India played South Africa in Kolkata. In a way, Kumble's record is a shade better, as he took that many wickets in 90 Test matches as against 131 matches for Kapil Dev. It was 14 years ago, in Manchester, that Kumble got his first Test wicket. In the 2004 season, Kumble's haul was 64 wickets, bettering Australian Shane Warne's 61 wickets.



KABADDI

India won the First World Kabaddi Cup held at Bombay, beating Iran 55-27. At half time, India were leading 27-12. The top scorers were Captain Sanjeevkumar (17 points) and Rameshkumar (7 points). In the semi-final, India beat Bangladesh 39-19. It may be recalled that India had won the Gold Medal at the Asian Games at Busan, South Korea, in 2002.

SWIMMING PRODIGY



Five year old K.G. student **PUJA BHANGIRE** swam the Arabian Sea from Uran to the Gateway of India, 17 km away in Mumbai, in a record time of 5 hrs 21 minutes. She entered water at 7.55 a.m. and reached the Gateway at 1.16 p.m. On hand to receive her was the Union Minister of Sports, Mr. Sunil Dutt, who presented her Rs 25,000 from the Nargis Dutt Foundation. Giving moral support to Puja were a group of children who swam for short distances along with her.

AWARDS



When the First International Cricket Council Awards were announced last September, the ICC named India's Vice-Captain **RAHUL DRAVID** the Player of the Year. He was handed the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy. The 31-year-old batsman was also chosen the Test Player of the Year. The title of the Emerging Player of the Year was conferred on the Indian left-arm seamer **IRFAN PATHAN**. Other Awards included One-Day Player of the Year (Andrew Flintoff of England) and Spirit of Cricket (New Zealand team).



READ AND REACT

A NOVEL CONTEST FOR READERS
CASH PRIZE OF RS. 250 FOR THE BEST ENTRY

Read the story below:

Dhaniram and Jagatram were neighbours. Dhaniram was rich, while Jagatram was poor.

He had four sons, who were well-behaved and good at studies. He brought them up with great difficulty.

The childless Dhaniram wished to adopt one of the boys as his own son. He went to Jagatram and made detailed enquiries about his sons. In the end he disclosed his desire.

But Jagatram kept quiet. He did not respond to the offer of adoption. Dhaniram was surprised. "Why, don't you want one of your sons to get the benefit of good education, a decent job, and a comfortable life? Should he miss such a golden opportunity?" Now consider this:



- ◆ What was Dhaniram's real objective behind his proposal?
- ◆ Why did Jagatram maintain silence?
- ◆ Suppose Dhaniram had put the proposal directly to the boys, how would they have reacted?

Write down your answer in not more than 150 words, give a title to your entry, and mail it to us along with the coupon below in an envelope marked "Read and React".

CLOSING DATE : January 31, 2005

Name -----Age-----Date of birth-----

School -----Class-----

Home address-----

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caption in a
few words, to suit
these pictures
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NARAYANA MURTY TATA

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Chilika

A gateway to ecstasy

Shimmering in the luxury of its blue expanse, relaxes the mystifying Chilika, India's largest brackish water lake. Encircled by hills and dotted with emerald green islands, Chilika is a winter resort for winged visitors from all over the world & home to irrepressible Irrawaddy dolphins. With a wide range of aquatic flora & fauna, Chilika is one of the hot spots of biodiversity. The gorgeous lake, replete with boats and canoes, reflects India at her colourful best. Truly, Chilika is the most delicious cuisine for hungry eyes and starved hearts.

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The tariff of the package is subject to change.



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TO SAVE THE AIR WE BREATHE

For the second day running, Veena's classmate and best friend, Shreya, has not come to school. Veena is worried about her. The previous evening itself, she had rung up Shreya's house to find out why she had not come, but managed to get only the housemaid, who informed her, "Baby is not well. Her parents have taken her to the doctor."

Shreya is a lively and diligent girl who never misses a day's class if she can help it. So, she would never have absented herself for two consecutive days unless she is really ill. Veena decides to call on her that evening.

She is shocked to find Shreya lying in bed, pale and listless. She has a hacking cough that seems to give her much trouble. Her eyes are red and watering, and she is doubled up by a coughing bout.

"Aunty, what's wrong with Shreya? What did the doctor say?" asks Veena of Shreya's mother who is in great distress.

"It's bronchitis, dear!" replies Shreya's mother sadly. "The doctor says it's caused by air pollution – all those petrol fumes and factory smoke in the air she inhales! What can we do? We live in the city after all! The doctor has put her on a course of antibiotics. She has to rest and take medicines for

at least a week!"

The next day, in class, Veena tells her teacher about Shreya's plight. The teacher clicks her tongue in sympathy. "Pollution is one of the greatest hazards of modern life. Air – pure, life-giving air – is Nature's most priceless gift to mankind. But we have proved ourselves unworthy of this gift! Our factories and our vehicles churn out immense black clouds of chemical pollutants that mingle with the air, causing diseases. Shreya's illness is only one of the possible ill-effects of air pollution."

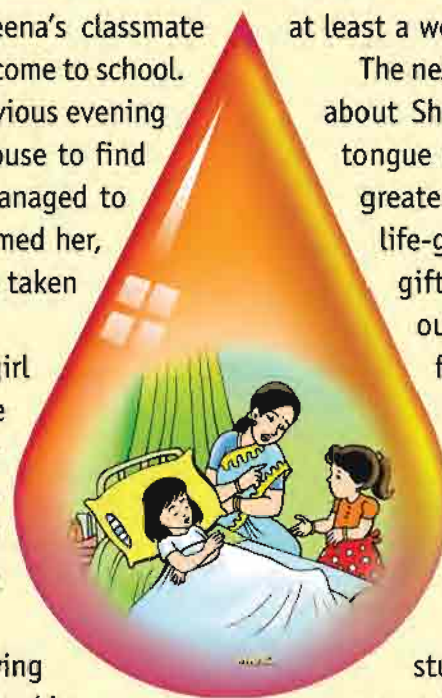
The class listens intently. Finally a student asks, "Miss, what can we do to prevent air pollution?"

"What do you think you could do?" the teacher shoots back. Suggestions pour in as the students think it over.

"We could walk or bicycle to school, instead of coming by car!" "Fireworks cause pollution; we can avoid them on Diwali and similar occasions." "We could also try to spread awareness among adults on air pollution."

"Very good!" says the teacher. "And here's one more suggestion – plant trees wherever possible. Trees play an important role in clearing up the air!"

"We will," promise the students.



Let's paint a better world

**Let's not pollute
air**



Dear Kids,

Write a slogan on the subject and win prizes.

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